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Human cloning grappled with by many governments

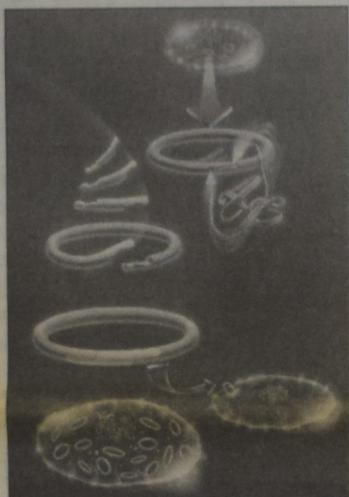
Alan Doerksen

Cloning has become a controversial subject with governments around the world, many of which are grappling with its ethical dimensions, as they consider possible laws for regulating cloning.

In February, a United Nations panel launched an initial round of talks aimed at drafting an international treaty to ban the cloning of human beings. The UN set up the special panel (called The U.N. Committee for an International Treaty Against the Reproductive Cloning of Human Beings) last year, at the request of France and Germany, after Italian fertility specialist Severino Antinori announced his intention to become the first scientist to clone a human being.

A technological genie

Numerous firms have since boasted of quick progress in research into the mechanics of cloning a variety of animals as well as



ALTAVISTA IMAGE

Cloning: difficult to regulate.

humans, their organs and cells.

"Once this technological genie is out of the bottle, trying to control it will be extremely difficult," said health law professor George Annas of the Boston University

School of Public Health. "Governments urgently need to agree upon international policies to ban human reproductive cloning and other technologies of genetic manipulation that could undermine society and our common humanity."

Annas was one of several scientific experts and human rights activists who addressed a news conference at UN headquarters in late February on the need for strong international controls on cloning practices.

Opinions of national leaders differ when it comes to therapeutic cloning (for research). The Vatican, the United States, Spain, Italy, Uganda and other countries requested that no distinctions be made on the objectives of cloning, and that therapeutic cloning be prohibited altogether, given that it entails the destruction of embryos after stem cells are removed.

France, Germany, Great Britain, Sweden, Israel, Russia, China,

and Japan, on the contrary, proposed that therapeutic cloning be permitted, sacrificing embryos to advance research.

Vatican spokesman, Archbishop Renato Martino, emphasized that the Catholic Church "supports a worldwide and comprehensive ban on human cloning, no matter what techniques are used and what aims are pursued."

Britain allows cloning for research

According to the *Wall Street Journal*, 29 European nations now prohibit human cloning for therapeutic ends, and only a single European country, Britain, has explicitly authorized cloning for research purposes.

British scientists can begin to clone human embryos for research under strict conditions, a House of Lords committee ruled recently. By pursuing this course, Britain is breaking ranks with the world scientific community, including

ST. BARNABAS CHURCH (BERKSHIRE, ENGLAND) WEBSITE
Richard Harries, Bishop of Oxford

Canada, which frowns on the creation of human embryos for medical research or treatment.

British officials say stem cells found in cloned embryos hold the potential to cure such diseases as

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Impressions of Russia: 1995-2002

Adrian and Wendy Helleman

Adrian and Wendy Helleman taught philosophy at Moscow State University for six and a half years. They have now transferred to the University of Jos in Nigeria, where they will work with graduate students in the department of religious studies.

What makes Russia so mysterious? Is it indeed a puzzle wrapped in mystery inside an enigma, as Winston Churchill once described it? The Russian writer Tutchev claims that Russia cannot be understood by the mind but only by the heart. If that is true, then all we can do is share some impressions.

Our first impression of Russia was from the plane, as we were landing at Sheremetyevo, Moscow's main international airport, in 1995. What struck us espe-



Adrian and Wendy Helleman in Manege Plaza, in Moscow.

cially were the birch trees on the perimeter; they immediately made us feel at home. At least from the air, if one disregards the occasional onion-domed church, Russia resembles Canada. We also felt

at home when we left the airport and saw the cars and the traffic. Old and dilapidated, the cars reminded us immediately of the Philippines, where we lived for almost a decade.

Our last impression, when we left earlier this year, was one of rushing to our seats on the plane at the last moment as the doors were closing, even though we had arrived at the airport more than two hours earlier. What with customs, checking in, paying for extra baggage, and immigration, service was extremely slow. Needless to say, our departure was not pleasant; it was typical of Russian bureaucracy at work.

In between these two, we can share a host of other impressions. Specifically, in this article we want to offer some impressions of what happened in Russia during these years and the life of Christians in Russia. Our perspective is admittedly limited, but we do want to comment on three things: 1. Some changes we have seen; 2. What has not (yet) changed; and, 3. The life of Christians in Russia.

Some changes we've seen

If Moscow has a main street, it is Tverskaya. This street runs from the Kremlin in a northwesterly direction and eventually joins the roads leading to St. Petersburg and the airport. Russians comment incessantly on how much it has changed since the Soviet period, when it was drab and gray. Today, it is anything but drab, especially at night, when the lights come on.

Dominating the skyline is the old Intourist Hotel, which far exceeds the guidelines established for buildings near the Kremlin. It was recently closed and demolition has started. A new, lower hotel will take its place. From the hotel, one can see a video billboard, advertising things Russians could only have dreamed about a decade before, but which they now can buy, if their budgets permit.

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News

Canadian government developing cloning guidelines

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Parkinson's and Alzheimer's. "We conclude that for this to be fully realized, no avenue of research should be blocked off at this stage," said Richard Harries, the Bishop of Oxford and chairman of the Lords' committee.

"Research on early human embryos raises difficult moral and scientific issues on which there are strong and sincerely held views," Harries told BP news. "After looking at all the issues very carefully, the committee was not persuaded that it would be right to prohibit all research on early embryos."

Canadian cloning

In Canada, the Canadian Institute of Health Research (CIHR) has officially unveiled its guidelines on stem cell research, which include a ban on public funding on projects that could lead to cloning.

But the new guidelines also open the door to study on fetal tissue from abortions, and embryos left over from fertility clinics. The new CIHR guidelines limit where and how researchers can get embryos for use in their research, and what they can do with them.

Julie White of the Canadian



MIKE PINDER
Canada's Health Minister, Anne McLellan

Cancer Society is optimistic about this. "Stem cell research offers great promise. This is one step toward a vision where no Canadian will fear cancer," she said.

Under the guidelines, researchers will be allowed public funding for their work with human embryos under conditions including these:

- the embryos were created for reproductive purposes and are no longer required;
- cloning is prohibited;
- creating embryos solely for

research purposes is prohibited;

- the donors of the embryos have given free and informed consent;
- consent must be renewed when embryos actually used;
- there were no commercial transactions involved in creating embryos;
- combining non-human stem cells with a human embryo or fetus, or human stem cells with non-human embryos is prohibited.

Maureen McTeer, who sat on the Royal Commission on New Reproductive Technologies, says opening the door to using human embryos for research is a bad idea.

"You want to talk slippery slope," she said. "That was the argument used in Nazi Germany: These are only Jews. Now we are saying these are only embryos." McTeer and other critics say these decisions should be made by Parliament, not a panel of scientists.

Health Minister Anne McLellan promises to bring in legislation that tackles the issue in the spring. "It would be fair to say that at least much of what you see in the guidelines will be reflected in some way in legislation," she said.

Last November, the Evangelical

Fellowship of Canada (EFC) sent a letter to the Health Minister asking the government to move immediately to ban all forms of human cloning.

"Human life is not a commodity to be designed and perfected upon, and human life should not be used as a means to some other end," said Bruce Clemenger, Director of the EFC's Centre for Faith and Public Life. "Human cloning is contrary to a commitment to the sanctity of human life."

Narrow vote in Germany

In Germany, a commission handpicked by Chancellor Gerhard Schröder has recommended that Germany allow restricted imports of stem cells for medical research, reports the *New York Times*.

A 1990 German law banned all genetic research on embryos, but some have argued that the law does not specifically forbid the importing of stem cells produced from human embryos.

The government set up the commission, the Ethics Council, in February — including scientists, philosophers and religious and legal scholars — to offer guidance

on complex issues of genetic research. But the council's narrow vote, with only 14 of the 25 members in favor of the proposal, has returned the pressure to the politicians and has bolstered criticism by those opposed to any form of embryonic research.

Meanwhile, Japan's government plans to extend its prohibition on human cloning to those cases where embryos are created to obtain stem cells. The Japanese decision is based on the law that prohibits the cloning of human beings, because it endangers "the dignity of the person, the biological safety of the species, and the maintenance of social order." The decision took effect last December.

The Japanese norm, in force since last June, prohibits the cloning of human beings, but allows the controlled cultivation of embryos to produce tissues and organs. Legislation related to cloning is under the supervision of the Ministry of Education and Science, which can punish lawbreakers with up to 10 years in prison and fines of \$80,000.

Australian government, religious leaders oppose human cloning for research

Alan Doerksen

MELBOURNE, Australia — The Australian government's federal cabinet has decided to ban the use of so-called spare human embryos for research — a decision supported by many religious and pro-life leaders in that country. But in contrast, the primate of the Anglican Church of Australia, has begged to differ, arguing that a human embryo should not be regarded as a living person with a soul in the first 14 days after fertilization.

The Australian government's decision overturns the recommendations of a broad-based parliamentary committee, which last year gave the green light for embryonic stem-cell research in Australia, Melbourne's *Age* newspaper reports.

The cabinet decision follows strong opposition by the Australia Federation of Right to Life Associations and the decision by U.S. President George W. Bush last year to ban federal funding to American scientists who wanted to develop new stem-cell lines, the *Age* said.

The new Minister for Aging, Kevin Andrews, a Catholic and social policy conservative, made a submission to the Cabinet that won

strong support from a majority of ministers, who declared their opposition to using spare IVF human embryos for stem-cell research.

Melbourne is home to some of the leading scientists in understanding stem-cell technology. The specialty is viewed as a key element in Australia's burgeoning biotechnology industry.

Voicing strong opposition

Recently, a large group of religious leaders and pro-life advocates wrote to the federal and state governments of Australia voicing their strong opposition to cloning of humans, reports Zenit. The letter stated: "We advise our Governments that producing human embryos by a cloning process or any other method of non-sexual reproduction is a grave offence to human dignity. It produces a laboratory embryo with no parents or guardians, in fact, no one concerned to protect his or her interests. It means that all such embryos would be likely to be destroyed, since the advocates of human cloning experiments acknowledge that to allow them to develop would be unsafe. "Much worse than cloning human beings to reproduce children would be the creation or use of human embryos for the purpose

of destructive experimentation."

The group questions the validity of the supposed distinction between "therapeutic" and "reproductive" cloning, saying, "to produce an embryo is always 'reproductive'; to destroy an embryo is never 'therapeutic.' The European Parliament has declared the distinction to be a sleight of hand and the Australian Health Ethics Committee described it as lacking transparency and concealing the truth.

"So-called 'therapeutic cloning' involves the manufacture of a new race of laboratory humans with the intention, right from the beginning, to exploit and destroy them as if they were laboratory animals. This would be the worst of all possible uses of the cloning technology.

"Cloning humans would also occasion a whole range of new ethical and social dilemmas, because the process radically dissociates procreation from the loving union of a man and a woman, and opens up new possibilities for designing our progeny, controlling their genetic destiny, or exploiting them for the advantage of others.

"We urge our political leaders to support the alternative, safer and longer established medical

technology of using a patient's own tissues as a source of stem cells for developing therapies, especially as they have much greater direct therapeutic potential in terms of tissue compatibility. We ask them to fund and encourage ethical stem cell research on placental and adult tissue."

This letter was signed by several Anglican and Catholic archbishops from across Australia, as well as Baptist, Presbyterian and Jewish leaders.

Archbishop supports cloning

In contrast, the primate of the Anglican Church of Australia, Archbishop Peter Carnley, has argued that a human embryo should not be regarded as a living person with a soul in the first 14 days after fertilization, according to ENI.

Speaking to a conference of Anglican bishops in Perth on March 19, Carnley urged the church to take into account recent scientific research which showed that fertilization was not the same as conception. Carnley's speech is part of a push to persuade the Anglican Church to reconsider its opposition to stem cell research.

Carnley said it was wrong for Christians to adopt a fundamental

attitude of suspicion and fear, let alone condemnation, to the application of human reason and research to reproduction. "The simple answer at this stage to the moral and ethical question of 'are we intruding improperly into the province of God?' is: 'No. We are exercising our God-given abilities to act as stewards, and to complete and perfect the work of creation.'"

But scientific research has shown quite clearly, Carnley asserted, that fertilization is not the same as conception. Conception is not a moment, but a process taking about 14 days. Up to the 14-day mark, he said, the embryo is human genetic material which "should be treated with respect, and certainly not frivolously," but not as though it is a conceived human individual.

This makes stem cell research "thinkable," so long as it is conducted under license and cells are collected before the 14th day. "We may think of this in terms of a radical form of contraception, but not in terms of the killing of an already conceived human individual."

At the end of their conference, the bishops made a statement saying that they had examined the ethics of stem cell research, but announced no decision about it.

News/Politics

Russia's economy booming, politics changing



COURTESY ADRIAN AND WENDY HELLEMEN

Wendy Helleman helps out student Oleg.

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Near this billboard is one of the most expensive shopping centres in the world. When we first arrived, there was only a big hole in the ground to mark the location of this shopping centre at the base of the Kremlin wall. Now ordinary Russians can browse its exclusive shops, although we seldom have seen any purchases made.

Nearby stands the newly rebuilt Church of Christ the Savior, which is Russia's national cathedral. The original church was built in the middle of the 19th century to mark the victory over Napoleon. In the 1930s, Stalin ordered it destroyed, and eventually a large open-air swimming pool was located on the spot. By 1995, the pool was already closed and construction had started on the present church, which cost half a billion U.S. dollars. Personally, we find it ugly; but it is nevertheless an impressive monument, as well as a symbol of the growing influence of the Russian Orthodox Church.

Moscow is not Russia

This building activity is an important indicator of the changes that have taken place, at least in Moscow. As Russians never tire to inform us, however, Moscow is not Russia. Even if only small parts of the country or the city itself have witnessed such activity, these changes do reflect the growing prosperity of those who are fortunate enough to live in the capital or other major cities, such as St. Petersburg and Nizhni Novgorod.

Lineups to buy the necessities of life are truly a thing of the past in the cities. The lineups we did see were mostly at McDonalds; aside from that, we saw pensioners who still line up to purchase cheap milk. Now the shops are filled with things to buy. Unfortunately, most people do not have the means to benefit from the opportunity.

New cars clog the streets of

major cities. The Volvo and Mercedes-Benz have replaced Russian makes. Although not everyone can afford a vehicle, there are no longer rush hours in Moscow. Instead, the streets are packed from early in the morning until late at night. We discovered, therefore, that we could travel faster using public transportation, especially the Metro, Moscow's subway system, which is one of the largest in the world.

New homes springing up like mushrooms

New homes are springing up like mushrooms on the outskirts of Moscow. Canadian-style wooden-frame homes with a high insulation factor are being built for those who can afford them; these are popular because Russia and Canada enjoy a similar climate. No longer confined to the dreary blocks of apartments that dot the landscape of every Russian city, at least a select few can enjoy the lifestyle familiar to most North Americans. Those who now have the means to acquire material things also do not feel the urge to emigrate as much as in the early 1990s.

A booming economy, at least in the major cities, means that many can afford to travel to foreign countries. Some of our students went skiing in the Alps every winter; others go to Cyprus, where there are now so many Russians buying property that Russian-language signs are found everywhere.

Politics, too, is changing. Gone are the antics of Yeltsin, who allowed the "Family," as it was called, to rule in his absence. That group has lost its influence. Today former oligarchs, like Berezovsky and Guzinsky, are in exile; others have taken their place, but in a greatly diminished role. Technocrats control many government ministries.

Corruption has not yet been eliminated, but has been curtailed

somewhat, or at least become less obvious. The egregious excesses of the former administration have been toned down. And there are even examples of honest people being appointed to prominent positions, such as the new head of the Russian Central Bank.

Winds of change are indeed blowing across the Russian plain. Not all these changes are for the better. Materialism and consumerism is the new religion of many, even of those whose earnings have not kept pace with the increased cost of living; in fact, during the '90s, large numbers of Russians saw their wages plummet and their

savings disappear. Their nostalgia for the past is understandable; they have had more than enough of change.

What hasn't (yet) changed

Many things have not changed and are not likely to change. While being friendly to a fault in private, Russians are still as rude as ever in public. Winters are much too long — it can start snowing in October and continue until April or May. The bureaucracy is stifling and inefficient and the concept of public service largely unknown. Driving is a challenge, not only because of the habits of other drivers but also

due to petty extortion practiced by traffic cops. If that were not bad enough, the pollution on the roads is life-threatening due to the use of leaded fuel. The environment is not high on the nation's list of priorities, largely because of an absence of money and political will.

Some things have not changed — not yet. Musical concerts are still affordable, although that is beginning to change. For many years after the collapse of the Soviet Union, ordinary people could enjoy the fine arts, even on meagre salaries; the lack of state subsidies may soon spell the end of such

See MUCH page 16...

France goes to extremes



Principalities & Powers

David T. Koyzis

Observers both inside and outside France were shocked at the strong showing made by Front National candidate Jean-Marie Le Pen in the first round of that country's presidential election last month.

The Front National is widely regarded as an extremist party, appealing primarily to disaffected segments of the French body politic, particularly the unemployed and those living in urban areas plagued by high crime rates. It has repeatedly called for sharply curtailed immigration, particularly from the former French colonial possessions in north and west Africa. The growth of the Muslim population in France, coupled with a fear of Islamic-sponsored terrorist acts in the western world, has contributed to the popularity of Le Pen's message.

France's electorate polarized

All of this points to the fact that, since the French Revolution more than two centuries ago, France's electorate has been polarized into two broad groupings: the traditionalist subculture, with its adherence to Roman Catholicism and the monarchy; and the secular subculture, with its anticlericalism and republicanism. For the former community, the Revolution was an unmitigated catastrophe, plunging France into the abyss of atheism, terror and political instability. For the latter the institutional church is one of the principal problems, retarding the progressive movement of society towards greater liberty, equality and fraternity.

In many respects the cleavage within the French political culture in the 19th century mirrored that of the Netherlands at the same time. The anti-revolutionary, Christian historical movement in the latter country bore a striking affinity to the French traditionalist community, notwithstanding the differences between Catholicism and the Reformation. Yet in the Netherlands the potentially antagonistic religious and ideological communities learned to share power for political purposes and largely refrained from the language of culture warfare that would trouble France and other western countries after the Revolution.

From 1789 until recently France went through a succession of shaky régimes: five republics, two empires, two monarchies, the Paris Commune and

a fascist collaborationist government during the Second World War. Each of these constitutions represented the rule of one of the two subcultures at the expense of the other. When a new régime was put in place, the supporters of the former régime were effectively exiled from the corridors of power.

Authoritarianism or chaos

Furthermore, because the French political system was so highly centralized, with all significant political decisions emanating from Paris, there were no other institutions remaining for the out group to occupy. Thus any effort at power-sharing or consensus building would be met by the French version of Rousseau's indivisible general will, embodied in a government bent on ensuring political uniformity throughout the country.

These conditions only served to push substantial elements within the two communities towards extremist political options. The secular republicans often supported the Soviet-backed Communist Party during the Cold War, while the traditionalists frequently supported racist and anti-Semitic groups, ranging from Action Française in the early 20th century to today's Front National. And both tended to support strong, potentially autocratic leaders promising to save the country from whatever ailments it was suffering.

Thus, in contrast to the moderate constitutional monarchy of Great Britain, French politics continually vacillated between some form of authoritarianism and near chaos, a pattern broken only with the establishment of Charles de Gaulle's Fifth Republic in 1958. Since then, the country's political institutions have acquired an unprecedented measure of popular support and stability. Yet, as Le Pen's showing at the polls indicates, the cracks are still there, bursting into the open during times of crisis.



David T. Koyzis teaches political science at Redeemer University College, Ancaster, Ontario, where he will be teaching a course in European politics in September.

Editorial

Reading dandelions

Harry der Nederlanden

When I look out my window, my view is framed by the bright yellow blossoms of the forsythia, and beyond, the deep pink flowers of the crabapple are opening, turning an awkward, gawky adolescent of a tree into Cinderella at the ball. Bright red and yellow tulips are in full flower. Some of them are already losing their heads. (None are the tulips of Calvinism, which, I'm told, never lose their heads.) The ebullient blue clusters of tiny forget-me-nots spread into the garden like Maple Leaf fans spilling out of the stadium into the streets to celebrate victory. They even venture into the lawn, where they join the invincible dandelions, whose brash yellow challenges that of the tulips.

As I stroll through my neighborhood with its immaculate, manicured lawns, I confess to chuckling in delight at the tenacity of the dandelion. My lawn celebrates that tenacity, as do the ditches and the playgrounds. In the spring even the most fanatical sprayer of herbicides will discover, to his horror, that some dandelions have triumphed over all his heroic efforts to cultivate a perfect lawn.

My neighbors on either side used to be retired G.M. workers who got up early every morning to take out their sprayers and do combat with the dandelion. I was seen as a traitor because I harbored the enemy. Like the Israelis, they would venture into my territory when they thought I was still asleep to assassinate as many of the little terrorists as they could.

Some years ago, when my kids were still small, in response to my neighbors' complaints, I offered a bounty of one cent for every dandelion they brought in. Soon all the little kids in the neighborhood were bringing me bouquets of dandelions. This was, however, not a defeat for the dandelion. I turned their own children against the dandelion haters. What cunning, eh? The kids learned to love dandelions. They themselves were turning yellow as dandelions. (Except for their fingers, which got a little gummy with dandelion milk.)

The dandelion sticks out its yellow tongue

Yes, my neighbors and I read our lawns quite differently. To them the dandelion was a cursed affront to their pride. To me it was a naughty but hopeful sign that we humans cannot completely dominate. The dandelion sticks out its yellow tongue at us every spring and gives us a gleeful, defiant raspberry.

But even the most fanatical of dandelion exterminators rejoice in the glorious variety of trees, shrubs and flowers that startle our eyes at the retreat of winter. They loudly proclaim, like blaring bugles, the infinite bounty of God and his effervescent joy in the multiplicity of his creations.

It's rather nice of God to remind us of that in so gentle a way.

We are also reminded of that, however, in very bloody terms. Think of Bosnia, Israel, Afghanistan, Indonesia. There is in all our cultivation and culture an ineradicable violence. We are all also exterminators.

That's what the racy journalists are talking about when they use the term "fundamentalism." We can quarrel with the use of the term, but religion has in it this bloody impulse to erase all differences and make us all the same. I'm speaking here of religion as an expression of fallen humanity. Just as God in the new Adam creates a new humanity, so do we, but we tend to set higher standards of admission. And when people don't measure up, we are tempted to whittle them down or carve them up. Faith does not inoculate us against such temptations. There have been Catholic fundamentalists, Calvinist fundamentalists, Lutheran fundamentalists, Anabaptist fundamentalists as well as Islamic fundamentalists. None can abide very much in the way of variety and difference. They consider the flowers of the field — and hurry to take out the sprayer. They see weeds everywhere.

The Festival of Faith and Writing sponsored by Calvin College (see p.12) celebrates the many different ways we represent and read not just creation, but people and events. We never experience the world "as it really is in and of itself" as if it were just there — brute fact. We are creative, imaginative beings from the get-go, and the reality that we behold is a composite of our own and other people's visions. God did not create the world to be complete in itself but to be unfolded and enriched by his image-bearers. So between our thoughts, our words and reality there is always a gap.

A fertile gap

A good thing, too, for otherwise we would be smothered by the weight and the inescapable immediacy of a fallen, violent world. The gap calls forth faith and hope. The gap is a fertile, generative one, not an abyss; it brings forth ever new visions, metaphors, poems, stories that reach far beyond what is right in front of our noses.

Of course, fallen, blind creatures that we are, we project false visions, false hopes, perverse imaginings into that gap. To dream dreams and to have visions that liberate, we need the Word of God to carry us across that gap toward his kingdom.

'A pox on all your over-cultivated lawns!'

But note that the Word God himself gives also comes with diversity. We have not one Gospel but four. That's hardly an invitation to boil the Gospel down to a one-dimensional formula. It invites many readings. In the Old Testament, too, we have not one prophet but a noisy gaggle of prophets shouting "Great is the Lord!" and "A pox on all your over-cultivated lawns!" The Word is an inexhaustible source (and not just for sermons) because it reveals a God — in triplicate — who exceeds all our efforts to describe him. And the same is true of the world and his creatures, especially us, because we are made in his image.

As writers and readers, we desperately or joyfully cast our words into the gap to answer this teeming world and this rich Word which address us and invite us to communion and community. And we do this because we trust that the gift of language is not given in vain but empowers us to speak truthfully, responsibly of God and his world.

Yet, in reaction to those who would have us believe that language spins webs of our own imagining, many Christian intellectuals want our truth-speaking to be a one-to-one correspondence with what is before us. This is just not the way it works, because what is before us is always suffused with what is behind us and what is beyond us. Our most creative, most supplicative use of language — in poetry, story, hymn — is allusive, probing, seeking, reaching, resonating far and wide. It calls a rose a rose but then goes on through the ages speaking of roses — and dandelions and sparrows — because when all these words have been spoken there is still the mystery, the gift of the rose. We keep planting and cultivating roses and can't resist speaking once again of them. And a rose is a relatively simple, elegant thing.

Yet, when Goethe speaks of the young man who goes out to pick a rose for his lady only to be pricked by a thorn, a whole world of stories flowers in our minds. And when a song tells of young women going out to pick roses for young soldiers, the words make our hearts bleed red.

At another level, the struggle, the *agon*, of attempting to witness to what is round about us and within us makes us more deeply aware of the gap between our words and what we are addressing. It humbles us, forces us to face our failure, fragility and fault. It calls us to repentance and conversion. For even our best and noblest words make us accomplices in the violence, pollution and degradation of our fellow human beings, fellow creatures and world.

Walk about, folks; it's spring and God is awakening us once again. Go out, look and listen. Its beauty is fragile and fleeting. Write a poem in fragile but fertile words. Or just mumble a little prayer of appreciation.

Or speak of dark, violent things so that among the ruin and rubble we may still dream of gardens and cities in which people can stroll to admire their neighbors' gardens. Or consider the dandelion, which pops up through fissures in the pavement and blooms out of the rubble.

Truth, though it is one, speaks in a blooming multiplicity of colors.

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Letters

More funds needed for specifically Canadian educational resources

RE: CCEF, to say that I have read the exchange between Jack Zondag and Menno Eelkema with interest, is putting it gently.

It is maybe good to add some facts to the discussion, to help the readers of *Christian Courier* understand what some of the issues are when they plan to contribute financially to one or more facets of Christian Education. (Note: I do not imply particularly CSI, nor CSC, or OACS, or any other ingredient in the Christian Education acronym soup.)

1. CSI, Christian Schools International, does not operate the same way as it did a few years ago. CSI has widened its scope by

becoming a support organization which is much more involved with the *international* aspect than with just the North American scene. As such, CSI is no longer divided into districts as once was the case.

Not geared specifically to Canada

2. Consequently, the new focus of CSI seems to imply that the aim of its curriculum design will have to be more universal as well. In other words, curriculum materials such as textbooks will have to satisfy the needs of a much wider market. By necessity, it would appear, CSI cannot be involved

CCEF collects Canadian cash for CSI

Mr. Eelkema and the CCEF board obviously misunderstood the facts as written in my opening paragraph on March 11th, which stated, "The word 'Canadian' in its name conveys the impression that CCEF supports curriculum development in the three Canadian regions, which form Christian Schools Canada. It does not do so." According to Eelkema, my statement was very misleading. That accusation needs to be examined. (I use the word *in* now in bold, to mean 'in Canada'. Eelkema uses the word 'for', which means 'for Canada', something entirely different.)

Neglecting obvious Canadian needs

For a period of roughly 10 years, CCEF did fund Canadian curriculum projects written by Canadians in Canada. All told, CCEF donated about 20 per cent of the money it collected for that purpose. The other 80 per cent went to CSI, an American curriculum organization based in Grand Rapids, Mich. Already in the 1990s, CCEF gradually made less and less money available for curriculum development done in the three Canadian regions, even though the need for such assistance was growing. By the late 1990s, many Ontario Christian school principals were frustrated by the fact that CCEF was neglecting obvious Canadian needs in favor of CSI.

As Eelkema pointed out, CCEF is content to let CSI write curriculum for Canada. He also stated that CCEF recognizes that organizations such as the OACS need to satisfy particular provincial curriculum requirements. However, CCEF is more concerned about helping CSI write curriculum for the world than helping Canadian Christian school organizations write what is

needed here in Canada.

On October 20, 2000, in its 25th anniversary booklet, the CCEF Board stated that the money it collects is for CSI in the U.S.A. At its Board meeting in the fall of 2001, CCEF reiterated its decision, namely, it would fund only curriculum developed by CSI. The CCEF Board then sent a letter to the OACS Board stating that decision.

I do not question the right of CCEF to ignore the curricular development needs of our three Canadian regions. However, I do want Canadian Christian School supporters to understand that CCEF no longer funds any curriculum work in any of those three Canadian regions. Hence my suggestion, that CCEF engage in truthful fundraising requests. It should be stated up front, in its ads, that the money raised will all be used for CSI curriculum work, not for materials written, developed, and produced in the three regions by Christian Schools Canada.

"Who should develop, write, edit and produce curriculum for Canadian Christian schools?" That is the big issue in this matter. Eelkema is convinced it can be done by the American-based CSI. Many others believe it must be done in Canada, by Canadians. I applaud the OACS, the SCS-BC and the Prairie Association of Christian Schools for their outstanding curriculum work.

If the CCEF Board ever becomes convinced that their present course of action should be altered 180 degrees, then the word 'Canadian' in its name would be legitimate. If, however, CCEF wishes to continue its fundraising activities in Ontario on behalf of CSI, then make the appropriate decision to rename the organization ACEF.

Jack Zondag, Principal,
Dundas Calvin Christian School,
Dundas, Ont.

with designing curriculum materials that are geared specifically toward the Canadian, and/or by extension the Ontario, Christian Schools needs. Please note that this is an observation only, and not intended to say that CSI is wrong in doing this.

3. In all fairness, most of our OACS elementary schools use the CSI Bible study, literature (grades 3-6 only), science, and health curriculum materials: they provide good classroom resources, at reasonable prices.

4. However, Canadian Christian schools need Canadian resources. Canadian mathematics is metric. Canada has its own history. Canada has its own geography. Canadian English is different from American English. Within this broader view, Christian schools as well have more specific needs to fill within the context of the requirements of their provinces and territories.

5. Our schools do not get support from CSI to design these materials. Instead, this work is done in Ontario by the OACS and by similar associations in the Western provinces.

6. I do not dispute that CCEF has the right to support Christian education in any way it sees fit: the foundation operates independently from any other institution. Indeed, it has been instrumental financially in the development of Christian curriculum resources.

7. What I am concerned about is that the CCEF only supports CSI in this important area. That is too bad. I would suggest that the CCEF as a Canadian Foundation first consider the needs of Canadian Christian schools before going to Grand Rapids. Currently, the Canadian Christian schools develop their own Christian school curriculum through institutions such as the OACS — at their own expense. The annual *Grow Smart* campaign is one of the major fundraising activities to underwrite the development of curriculum materials.

In further response to what Eelkema wrote: Yes, the OACS has big plans: completing an excellent mathematics curriculum for K-8, the Intermediate History Program, science and social studies for Grades K-3, etc. and all that without the needed CCEF support.

Yes, we have big plans in Ontario. Businesses have big plans. Farmers have big plans. Families have big plans for their children. Big plans come forth out of a vision. Christians with big plans have a vision based on a Biblical foundation. The Bible never suggests that we think small in furthering God's Kingdom. On the contrary, Christ has always suggested and continues to suggest that we think big. If we carry out the Kingdom vision, then no plan is too big, because it will be blessed when Christians work together.

Arie J. Vanderstoel,
Wellandport, Ont.

Pluralism must be lived out

Thank you for the lengthy review by Mark VanderVennen of the book *Nation to Nation: Aboriginal Sovereignty and the Future of Canada*. The Public Justice Resource Centre worked with educational publisher Irwin Publishing to publish this book based on our strong belief that pluralism must be lived out in Canada for all of us, including our Aboriginal neighbors.

Readers may wish to know that the book can be ordered through the PJRC, 229 College St. #311, Toronto ON M5T 1R4, or online, www.cpj.ca/pjrc

Murray MacAdam, Editor,
Public Justice Resource Centre
Toronto

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Poetic proclamation appreciated

Thank you for Bea Vandervelde's wonderful poetic retelling of the resurrection story in your Easter issue. In "Finally the Poet" Walter Brueggemann argues that preaching tied to prose is invariably preaching tied to the empire. This is not to say that all poetry is honoring of the Kingdom, but Vandervelde's poetic proclamation of the resurrection beautifully and evocatively cuts through both the heavy theologizations and the flippant commercializations of the Easter season. Christ is risen, indeed!

Brian Walsh,
Toronto



Education

Redeemer University College has solid academic strengths, says new VP**Alan Doerksen**

ANCASTER, Ont. — Protestant universities "have to be careful to balance academic excellence with being faithful to the Christian faith," asserts Dr. Jacob Ellens, who will become the new vice-president academic at Redeemer University College effective July 1. "I think we have to keep a healthy balance. We can't be satisfied with either side of that equation. We have to ... hold onto both of those in a dynamic equilibrium," he tells *Christian Courier*.

Ellens currently serves as associate professor of history and associate dean (Foundations Division) at Redeemer. He came to the university in 1987, and says "I'm part of the second wave" of professors to come to Redeemer.

Lessons to be learned

Among his areas of research, Ellens has studied the secularization of England's Oxford University. He sees lessons that can be drawn from that experience in that many of Oxford's colleges when founded had charters that included as their stated purpose "to promote godliness and good learning."

Ellens notes that, for Redeemer, "the key is to remain faithful to our mission as a Christ-centred academic community, in which our teaching and scholarship will be rightly ordered toward God and His glory."

Ellens sees no signs of secularization at Redeemer because there is "a very strong insistence at every level that we be faithful to the Reformed tradition," he tells

Christian Courier.

Ellens' main teaching specialty is 19th century Great Britain, he says. "A lot of my focus has been on church and state questions — the role of faith in public life." He has also enjoyed teaching western civilization courses, which involve "helping students to get a sense of their moorings, and get a stronger sense of how our faith interacts with that."

In his new position, Ellens will focus mainly on administrative work, but he will continue teaching one course per year. He sees his new position as a challenging one. One big challenge the university will face is "finding new faculty people of quality." Right now, universities are "in a hiring binge," so "we're in a much more competitive situation.... We have to find people who are committed, competent." The university is growing, and some staff are approaching retirement, so there is a need to hire new faculty.

Solid strengths

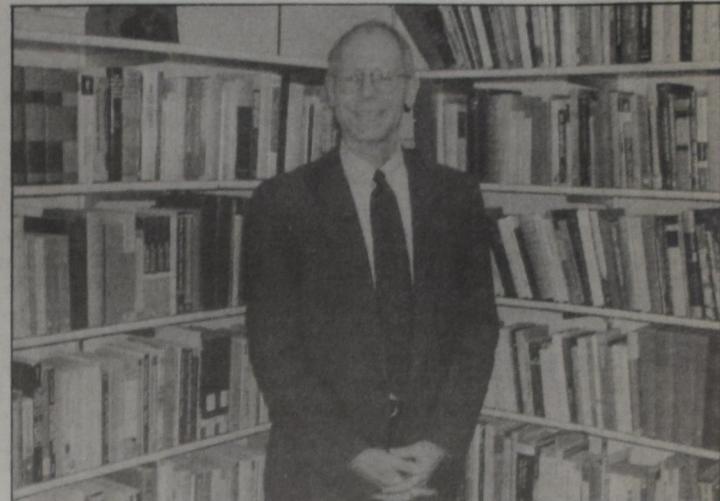
Redeemer has some solid academic strengths, asserts Ellens. "One of our strengths is in our smallness." Also, "what we do very well is give students a solid liberal arts and science grounding." That can be a strong foundation for further studies or the working world, he observes.

In contrast, some other universities allow students to become so specialized that they don't get a well-rounded education, he notes.

Ellens holds a Ph.D. from the University of Toronto, where he

also earned his M.A. His undergraduate degree comes from Trinity Christian College in Illinois. He and his family attend First Christian Reformed Church in Hamilton, Ont.

Ellens replaces Dr. Wytse van Dijk, who will return to teaching at Redeemer after serving as interim VP since August 2000. Martin Mudde, Redeemer's board chair, expressed confidence in the choice of Ellens as the chief academic officer for Redeemer. Redeemer president, Dr. Justin Cooper, echoed the board chair's endorsement of Ellens and expressed his appreciation for Van Dijk's service during the interim period.



Dr. Jacob Ellens

COURTESY REDEEMER UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

Help only comes with humility

The shortest prayer in the Bible is found in Matthew 14:30. Here Peter, collapsing in the waves, cries to Jesus, "Lord, save me!"

What if Peter had been a little prouder? He would have sank a little deeper. What if, without the prayer, Christ had raised him up, and put him back in the boat? Might the prouder Peter have turned to his mates and said, "I could've made it on my own"?

At what point do you cry for help? How deep do you have to sink before you hold out your hand?

Fires, porn, infant baptism, etc.

As the semester winds down, I am reminded of a number of characters that have come through my door asking for help. Here are a few stories.

A few weeks ago a familiar face walked in. "Guess what?" she asked me.

"What?" I said.

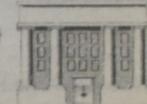
"My apartment burned down," she replied, handing me a picture of it on the front page of the local newspaper. She told me the story, smiling. Maybe she was still in shock, or maybe the smile was a newfound joy in being alive. She had new accommodations already, and was insured, and nothing of deep sentimental value was destroyed. I gave her a plastic container of homemade cookies donated by a local church member. When you have nothing, help is all there is.

Sometimes asking for help is dangerous. You might be changed. I had a young couple come in a number of times to discuss, among other things, the tradition of infant baptism. They wanted to see Biblical support, and as only one came with a Reformed background, the conversation became tense at times. This is an issue that cuts right down a number of deep divides in the Christian church, and we tried to focus on understanding each other rather than proving ourselves right or better. Help may threaten our taken-for-granted assumptions about faith.

Asking for help can be embarrassing. A number of young men came in this semester confessing to pornographic addiction. Access on the Internet is so easy, you may even end up at an X-rated site by accident. Interestingly enough, a few of them were also working their way through a daily devotional

Campus Culture

Peter Schuurman



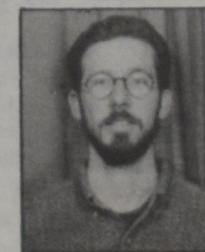
program — offered at a Christian "self-help" web site.

Needs come in all sorts of colors. I had a suicidal male stop by to test me on some of his questions, as well as a woman who was assaulted in the campus parking lot. But not all visits are sensational or crisis-centred. In fact, most who come by do so only to chat about their day, their relationships, or their studies. These become, in the long run, journeys that we take together, with me as spectator, facilitator, and older friend. Ninety percent of helping, they say, is just showing up.

I need somebody, HELP!

I want to end by emphasizing one vital detail in all these scenarios: in all these cases, people came to me asking for help. I NEED HELP can be the three most difficult words to string together in the English language. For someone to walk towards my office, knock on the door, and cross the threshold with their burden trembling in their hands is an act of tremendous courage. But it can't be any other way. Help can be offered, but it works best when someone has decided to seek it themselves. I know, because I've stood on that frightening threshold myself.

Let me put it differently, using theological terms. Sometimes we may sit in our dark offices or bedrooms and mope about the dreariness of our life. We may wail loudly to God, asking for a miracle, for grace, for deliverance. But grace must be received without coercion. We must stand up, get off our chair, and step outside into the sunlight and cool breeze, and get some exercise. And maybe walk into a house or office where we know we will find help. Children are good at this. At what point did we start to believe that we can do it on our own?



Peter Schuurman is the Christian Reformed campus chaplain at Brock University in St. Catharines, Ont.

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Opinion/Writing Fiction

Women of courage

Sini Den Otter

Whether they were acknowledged or not, female theologians have always been active in the Christian church. They have contributed greatly to our understanding of who God is.

Their committed lives were living testimonies to their dedication and calling to serve God. However, in their written work they have remained isolated voices. It is only in the last few decades there has been a renewed interest in what they had to say.

Priscilla, one such theologian, is mentioned together with her husband Aquila in Romans 16. She taught people in their house church. A converted Jew by the name of Apollos, was instructed in the Gospel by this couple. Both Priscilla and Aquila received much praise from the apostle Paul.

Medieval female theologians

We know from history books that there were also female theologians in medieval times. One of them was Hildegard von Bingen. She was born in Germany in the year 1098, and taught on a wide variety of topics considered out of harmony with the established tradition. Hildegard's extreme views were tolerated in the Roman Catholic church only because her insights were obtained through her visions. She was a visionary theologian rather than an educated theologian. Hildegard founded two monasteries, wrote hundreds of hymns, answered many theological queries. She authored six books on theology and other topics. She

was a Christian feminist, as is clearly indicated by one of her positions: "Contrary to the clear position of St. Paul, man was made for woman just as equally as woman was made for man." Her writings on women were deeply rooted in her insights on the feminine aspects of God.

Hildegard was a woman of her time, yet well ahead of her time in the insights she learned from what she claimed were direct revelations from God through her *visions*. At that time however, representatives of the Pope who examined her writings did not take them very seriously, or consider them a threat to the status quo. She drew the ire of the hierarchy only when she openly defied the church when there was a dispute about a man who was buried on the abbey grounds but was later discovered to have been involved in revolutionary activities. The church said he should be exhumed, but Hildegard said that this man's sins had been forgiven and he should be allowed to remain there. When the local authorities deemed it necessary to exhume the body, she went to the grave and blessed it. She then proceeded to remove the gravestones so that the body could not be identified.

All this happened when Hildegard was in her eighties. Her abbey was put under censure and the celebration of the sacraments and the singing of hymns were forbidden. The censure was finally lifted after a lengthy process. The ban on music was especially painful to Hildegard. She wrote strong words to the church council, re-

minding them of their wrongdoing in silencing the praising of God in music and song. It is only in the past 40 years that an interest in the teachings of this remarkable woman, as well as many other mystics, has come about. In 1940, the sanctity of Hildegard von Bingen was officially recognized by the Vatican.

Another woman worth mentioning is Sor Juana, a Mexican muse. She was born in 1651 in a small town 50 miles from Mexico City. She was the illegitimate child of a Creole woman and Spanish military officer. She never knew her father, but had a caring mother and a grandfather who owned an enormous library. Sor Juana taught herself to read by the age of three and entered the convent of St. Jerome at age 18. She never stopped reading and learning and published many books of poetry.

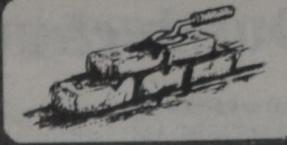
She also translated a sermon on the love of Christ written by a Jesuit priest in a way that was incomprehensible to the common people. While translating this sermon in clear and understandable language she discussed her disagreement with the sermon. She offered her own theological views and, interestingly, the bishop of Puebla published her work and highly commended her for her clarity on the subject.

Torrent of resentment

However, at a later time, this same bishop changed his mind and decided to write Sor Juana a letter, sharply rebuking her. He reminded her of the words of the apostle Paul stating that women should be silent

Building Trust

Vicky Van Andel Ed.



in the church; they should not speak. (1 Cor. 14:34). He then urged her to devote herself only to the activities within the convent. Sor Juana responded to that bishop with a torrent of the dammed-up resentment she held in her soul, especially toward the statement on women being silent. In a sharp rebuke she wrote: "Not only women, but also men, who, merely for being men believe they are wise, should be prohibited from interpreting the Sacred Word if they are not learned and virtuous and of gentle and well-inclined natures... keeping silence is intended not only for women, but for all incompetents."

Sor Juana challenged the bishop of Puebla because she failed to understand why he put her down so sharply. She gave him many examples of women who had served their church through writing and teaching. "What then is the evil in my being a woman?" she asked. The lengthy discussions that followed left Sor Juana exhausted. She never wrote again and gave away all the books in her library. She withdrew into her convent and so, ironically, into silence. She died, probably of smallpox, at age 44 while she was caring for the sick nuns in the convent. However, she left behind a mass of literature which is now of great interest to theologians and historians. Sor Juana is an example of a brilliant woman who was silenced by the church.

Would the church be different if these women would have been allowed to teach and to publish their writings freely? These were dedicated and pious women, burning with zeal for the sake of the Gospel and their love for God. They took risks and never doubted that God called them to study and speak. They also paid a heavy price for doing it. It is clear that the time was not yet ripe for them to make a difference in the church and in society at large.

The insights, wisdom, courage and sacrificial lives of these two women, among many others, offer us beacons of hope. It has taken a long time, but equal opportunities for women and men to exercise their God-given gifts, in Christ, are becoming more and more a reality. We trust that the Christian church will soon embrace all its female members as true and complete image-bearers of God. Churches must offer positive affirmation to women as they express their gifts. Women need to be encouraged by the church, especially those women who have a strong and heartfelt desire to serve God in ordained positions.

Sini Den Otter is an ordained hospital chaplain in Edmonton, and the author of *Binder of Wounds*, a book of reflections.

Anyone who would like to contribute to this column is invited to contact Vicky Van Andel via fax at: 1-780-473-0970 or by e-mail at: vanandel@oanet.com

Writing fiction is a way of loving God

Sonya VanderVeen Feddema

In his article, "The Life of the Mind is an Act of Love", Cornelius Plantinga describes what it means to love God with all our minds. His words accurately describe what I try to do as I seek to love God through writing fiction. He says, "To hear in the world, both the song of God and the groaning of all creation, to prize what is lovely and to suffer over what is corrupt, to ponder these things and to struggle to understand them — these are ways of loving God with all our minds" (*Christian Courier*, Feb. 21, 1997).

Loving God through writing fiction means struggling. It involves searching, pulling, tugging, looking, groaning, hurting, laughing till stories take shape. While pursuing this endeavor, I am guided by a certain view of what

good stories are and what they are not. Allow me to share some ideas that have shaped my perspective on writing fiction.

A mandate for Christian fiction writers

First, stories are harbingers of hope. In her book, *The Gates of Excellence*, Katherine Paterson states, "I want to become like Joshua and Caleb. I have crossed the river and tangled with a few giants, but I want to go back and say to those who are hesitating, 'Don't be afraid to cross over. The promised land is worth possessing, and we are not alone.' I want to be a spy for hope" (Elsevier/Nelson Books, 1981, pp. 109). This quote contains a mandate for Christian fiction writers. Not every story has a happy ending, but because of Jesus' redeeming power, stories

must contain elements of hope.

Second, stories avoid hasty, unrealistic remedies. In his editorial, "Good Stories Avoid Quick Fixes," Bert Witvoet states, "Some Christian writers produce romantic (rose-colored) stories, leaving out the reality of sin in their character(s). They feel they have to have good person(s) or a happy ending because a realistic or pessimistic picture might leave the impression that life is meaningless.... In our attempt to make things look rosy we are in fact undermining the grace of God.... Good Christian writers face the reality of life and are not afraid of the feeling component of a story, but they will not manipulate their readers with cheap tricks" (*Calvinist Contact*, Dec. 11, 1987).

Third, stories deal with all aspects of life, but need not gain

authenticity by graphically defining sin and evil. The Bible itself clearly depicts sin, showing everything from murder, adultery, rape, to family violence. But it never sensationalizes sin by being explicit. Rather, it reveals sin for what it is by showing that evil deeds have consequences.

Carroll O'Connor, star of CBS's *In the Heat of the Night*, said, "The Bible is filled with human violence, although it does not get into all kinds of graphic descriptions of what happens.... 'Art' is being able to say what goes on in life without demonstrating it absolutely" (*Christian Courier*, Sept. 23, 1994).

Lastly, stories are not sermons. Jim Vreugdenhil, in his preface to *Choices*, says "A story is not an essay, article or statement. It is a form of literature that creatively

opens up the world that is, in contrast to other forms of writing which deal with what should or could be" (Ontario Alliance of Christian Schools, 1994, pp. ix).

When I write fiction, I do not do so in order to convert someone to Christianity. I write in order to tell the truth about reality, which, thank God, includes His love and redemption in a sinful world.

Writing fiction is a creative act of love for the Creator of words, ideas, themes, of our very minds. For me that means struggling and striving to write stories of integrity, which give glimpses of the love that sent the Word into the world.

Sonya VanderVeen Feddema lives in St. Catharines, Ont.

Church

Dutch churches set 2004 as deadline for merger

Andreas Havinga

AMSTERDAM, (ENI) — Aiming to inject a sense of urgency into a long-running church unification process, officials of three Dutch denominations have set a target date for their merger into one church.

The officials named 2004 as the provisional deadline for completing the merger of the three denominations: the Netherlands Reformed Church (NHK), the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (GKN) and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

A single Reformed denomination

The three denominations are currently linked together in a federation called the Uniting

Protestant Churches in the Netherlands (UPCN), but the merger will create a single Protestant church with 2.7 million members.

Church officials set the date to propel a process that has become increasingly bogged down since its launch four decades ago. The decision was announced by UPCN secretary Bas Plaisier April 18 at a joint meeting of the synods of the three churches in Alphen aan de Rijn.

The three church synods are expected to take a final decision on the merger at a joint meeting on December 12, 2003, paving the way for formal union January 1, 2004, the UPCN said in a statement.

The UPCN hopes to stimulate preparatory discussion among the churches involved, and has issued

a brochure highlighting the 2004 date, in what the Dutch news agency ANP said was a "propaganda campaign to get church members interested in the merger."

Slow process takes a toll

In an address to the joint synod meeting, Plaisier said that the sluggish pace of the process had taken a toll on the project.

"A process that lasts so long exposes it to wear and tear," he said.

Explaining the slow pace, he said that over the past decade, the uniting churches had been "far too busy with church structures," and a lot of time had been spent on discussing models of unity that sought only to avoid splits. "Sometimes," he added, "these [models] only served to lead us away from

present and future [church] unity."

The Reformed Alliance (Gereformeerde Bond), a conservative body within the Netherlands Reformed Church (NHK), expressed deep concern over this decision. The Alliance secretary, P. J. Vergunst objected that weariness was not a good reason to end the process.

The Alliance expressed the hope that the new church would be a "confessing missionary church." Vergunst also suggested that this created an obligation to talk about confessions and offices, covenant and baptism, marriage and worship services.

Bridging of gap urged

To push for an organizational unity while a plurality of vision still exists on several important

points will not lead to real unity, he said.

Plans for the united church date back to 1961, when 18 NHK and GKN clergy urged a bridging of the gap between the two churches. The GKN was formed as a denomination in 1892 after breaking away from the NHK.

The Lutheran Church officially joined in the uniting process in 1986.

At their April 18 meeting, the three synods also overwhelmingly approved a report which proposed far-reaching cost-cutting measures and the reorganization of the UPCN, including a 20 per cent reduction in staff positions — from 510 to 400 — at the UPCN's national secretariat in Utrecht by the end of 2004.

Barring of Catholic clerics from Russia feared to be part of 'campaign'

Andrei Zolotov

MOSCOW (ENI) — In one of the latest events in a series described by the Roman Catholic Church in Russia as an "organized campaign" against it, a Catholic bishop was turned back at Moscow's international airport as he was trying to return from Poland to his diocese in eastern Siberia.

On April 19, border guards canceled without explanation Catholic Bishop Jerzy Mazur's visa for Russia.

Mazur, a Polish citizen, heads the Catholic diocese based in Irkutsk, one of four Catholic structures in Russia elevated by the Vatican in February to fully fledged dioceses, an action strongly criticized by Russia's dominant Orthodox Church.

Two days after Mazur was barred from entering Russia, his cathedral in Irkutsk was picketed during Sunday mass by about 100 Orthodox protesters denouncing Catholic "expansion" in Russia.

Catholic heretics out'

"Catholic heretics — out of Irkutsk," read one of the slogans, according to press reports.

A fortnight before Mazur was

barred from entering Russia, the authorities canceled the visa of Stefano Caprio, a Roman Catholic priest from the town of Ivanovo, as he left Moscow for his native Milan. Caprio had served in Russia for 12 years.

The Russian Foreign Ministry initially failed to give any reason for the cancellation of the two clerics' visas. Authorities pointed out that Russian law allows the state to deny visas without explanation.

Unnamed officials, however, were quoted by the Interfax news agency as saying the priests were exiled for "activities incompatible with their status" — a euphemism usually reserved for diplomats being expelled for espionage.

"What has been happening in the last couple of months shows that an organized campaign has been unleashed against the Catholic Church in Russia," Archbishop Tadeusz Kondrusiewicz, the leader of Russia's Catholics, said.

"The expulsion of a Catholic bishop, who has not violated any legislation in force, breaches all conceivable limits of civilized relations between the state and the church," Kondrusiewicz expressed

"a resolute protest" and appealed

to Russian President Vladimir Putin to "protect religious freedom and prevent discrimination against Russian Catholics."

Orthodox church denies link

The Russian Orthodox Church — which has vocally protested against the recent boost in the status of the Roman Catholic Church in Russia — said it had nothing to do with the authorities' decision to cancel the Catholic clerics' visas.

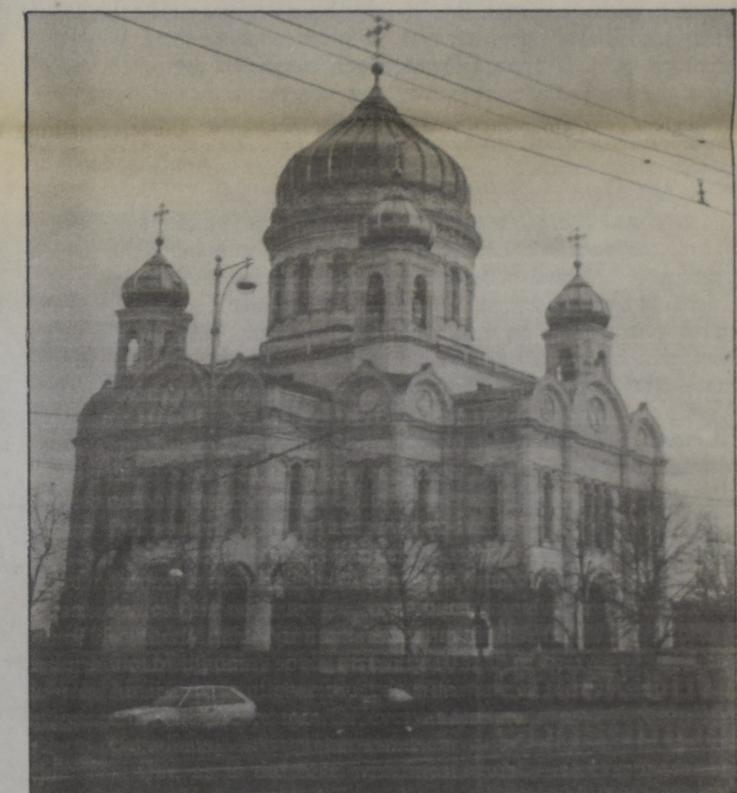
"There is no link between that incident [of Mazur's expulsion] and the position of our church," Patriarch Alexei II of the Russian Orthodox Church was quoted by news agencies as saying.

Igor Kowalewsky, a priest and general secretary of the Conference of Catholic Bishops in Russia, told ENI the expulsions were "an unfortunate misunderstanding." The bishops' conference had formally requested an explanation from the Russian government about the expulsions, he said.

Expulsion creates huge resonance

"Bishop Mazur is not a private individual, not simply a Polish citizen; he is a Roman Catholic bishop appointed by the Holy See," Kowalewsky said. "His expulsion has created huge resonance. Unfortunately, our historical experience teaches us that the expulsion of bishops is linked to the persecution of our church. We don't want to have the impression that a new wave of such persecution is beginning in Russia today."

Viktor Khrul, editor of the Russian Roman Catholic newspaper



COURTESY ADRIAN AND WENDY HELLEMAN
The newly rebuilt Church of Christ the Savior, in Moscow, which is Russia's national Russian Orthodox cathedral.

Svet Yevangelia, said the incidents were hurting the country's Catholic church where it was most vulnerable, since about 80 per cent of the country's Catholic clerics are foreigners.

Priests, monks and nuns who are not Russian nationals are refraining from traveling abroad for fear that they will not be allowed to return to Russia, Khrul told ENI.

But since Russian regulations require them to leave the country

each year to renew their visas, the problem is perhaps only being postponed, he said.

"In theory, there is a danger that in a year's time we may end up almost without clergy."

The Roman Catholic Church in Russia claims about 600,000 adherents out of a total population of 144 million. Two-thirds of Russians identify themselves as Orthodox.

Food..? For Thought..??

Silence is truly golden

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Self-discovery of
Imprisoned Persons

Church

Canadian embassy refuses refuge to persecuted Iranian Christians

Barbara G. Baker

ISTANBUL (Compass) — The Canadian Embassy in Ankara turned down an Iranian Christian family's immigration application in April, closing the last known option of religious asylum for former Muslims Mahmoud and Atefeh Erfani and their three daughters.

After nearly three years as refugees in central Turkey, the Erfanis face eventual deportation by Turk-

ish authorities back to Iran, where Muslims who convert to Christianity can be executed for apostasy.

Erfani's wife, whose health is deteriorating from advancing multiple sclerosis diagnosed eight years ago, is now in a wheelchair. But with considerable effort, she was able to accompany her husband and daughters to Ankara by bus from Nevsehir, where the family has been temporarily settled by

the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) since their arrival in Turkey.

No reason for refusal

The Canadian Embassy issued a letter declaring that based on "a careful consideration" of his April 18 interview, Erfani did "not satisfy the definition of Convention refugee nor member of the country of asylum class." The embassy let-

ter gave no specific reason for the refusal. Church sources in Canada, however, said they believed Mrs. Erfani's health problems were most likely the determining factor.

According to definitions cited in the refusal letter, a "Convention refugee" is any person who "by reason of well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, or membership in a particular social group or political opinion" has left his country and "by reason of that fear, is unwilling to return to that country."

In the second category, "asylum class" was defined under Canadian policy as someone who "has been and continues to be seriously and personally affected by... a massive violation of human rights" with "no possibility, within a reasonable period, of a durable solution."

Mashhad, the Erfani's home town, is known as a centre of Shiite fanaticism; authorities there executed a convert Christian pastor for apostasy in 1990. Then the city's two Protestant churches were forced to close, and three convert Christian couples were arrested,

threatened, and formally charged with apostasy. All three families managed to escape from Iran and obtain religious asylum in Europe and North America, as were the convert pastor in Tehran who baptized the Erfanis and the local Presbyterian elder who first brought Mahmoud Erfani to church services.

Erfani said he had turned the family's Turkish residence permits over to the Nevsehir police authorities the day they expired, along with the Canadian Embassy's August letter. "I have nothing in my hands now," he said. "I am afraid that we could be sent back to Iran."

Erfani requested, "Just pray that God's will be done for our family, and that we will be filled with the Holy Spirit, to bear all these problems with God's peace."

According to a representative of an Anglican church in Toronto which pledged full sponsorship for the stranded family, the family's case is now closed with Canadian immigration. Even "if new evidence is presented," the representative told Compass, "there is no way to reopen the case."

Persecution summit focuses on 'absolutely genocidal' regimes

Tom Strode

WASHINGTON (BP) — The considerable influence of American Christians can make a difference in the lives of persecuted believers in North Korea and Sudan, participants at a May 1 summit on the issue were told.

Christian denominational and organizational leaders met at a Washington hotel for a second summit on global persecution. The first such summit, held in 1996, helped awaken American Christians to the plight of believers in various countries. It also launched a campaign that resulted in enactment of the International Religious Freedom Act and establishment of the International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church.

Conveners of the latest summit hoped it would have a similar impact in aiding Christians under two especially brutal regimes. North Korea and Sudan are "in a class by themselves," Nina Shea told the participants. They are "absolutely genocidal," she said. Shea, director of Freedom House's Center for Religious Freedom, is a member of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF), a panel that advises the White House and Congress on persecution issues.

Michael Horowitz, who, as a

Jew, has been a leader in the anti-persecution movement in Washington, encouraged the participants to maintain their efforts. North Korea and Sudan "are close to collapse," he said.

The efforts of American Christians on behalf of fellow believers also will help other religious adherents, Horowitz said. "If you protect your brothers and sisters, you give hope to moderate Muslims in their fight [against radicals] for Islam," he told the audience.

Afterward, Chuck Colson told Baptist Press he hoped the summit would result in a "real resurgence of moral outrage on the part of lay Christians." American Christians need to "reignite the passion and sustain it," said Colson, founder of Prison Fellowship and a leader in the anti-persecution effort. It is going to be a "long fight," he said.

North Korea and Sudan are two of only six countries on the State Department's list of "countries of particular concern" regarding the state of religious freedom. The USCIRF has described Sudan as "the world's most violent abuser of the right to freedom of religion and belief." The panel has reported "religious freedom does not exist" in North Korea and has said the people of that Asian country are "perhaps the least free on earth."

Welcome the new pastors

To the Corinthians:

"If Timothy comes, see to it that he has nothing

to fear while he is with you, for he is carrying on the work of the Lord, just as I am. No one, then, should refuse to accept him." 1 Cor. 16:10,11a

To Timothy:

"Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith, and in purity. Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of scripture, to preaching and to teaching. Do not neglect your gift, which was given you through a prophetic message when the body of elders laid their hands on you. Be diligent in these matters; give yourself wholly to them, so that everyone may see your progress." 1 Timothy 4:12-15

This spring I've had the privilege of teaching a course at my denomination's seminary. Because of this, I have been able to interact on a regular basis with the future leaders of the church.

And it has been delightful.

To a person, I have found these students to be sincere, thoughtful, and very concerned with exegetical integrity. I worked with them in a course titled "Evangelistic Preaching," a one-credit course in which each student preaches an intentionally evangelistic sermon and the others evaluate it.

Because our work centres around the use and application of Scripture, we have good discussions about whether certain passages can be explained and applied in the method used by our preacher *du jour*. We talk about Greek verb tenses and eschatological theology, about the differences between Matthew, Mark, and Luke, about Paul's passion for evangelism, about Jesus' care for the outsider.

Deep desire to honor the Word of God

In these discussions I have been struck again and again by the students' deep desire to honor the Word of God. They take their tasks very seriously, both the preaching and the evaluating of sermons preached. Often they point out things I hadn't considered. Often, I find that they are teaching me.

It has been a joy for me to be with them. Even on Monday mornings when my usual schedule would call for sleeping late and reading novels, I find I am eager to spend time with these students. I want to hear them preach. I want to hear them

Chapter & Verse

Rev. Mary S. Hulst



talk with each other, encourage each other, tease each other gently over silly mannerisms or a mis-spoken words.

They are my brothers and sisters, and I love them.

You can call me Mary

At the beginning of the class they asked me what they should call me. I am not a professor, I do not have a degree more advanced than the one they are currently working on, and someday we will find ourselves sitting together at class meetings or Synod. I told them those things and then said, "You can call me Mary, and if you aren't comfortable with that, my parishioners call me Pastor Mary. Feel free to use either." Over the term, they have called me by both names, and a few have used "Professor Hulst," although it makes me grin when they do.

These are my brothers and my sisters, they are my students and my teachers, and soon they will be my colleagues. Soon they will be your pastors. They will preside over weddings and funerals, they will preach at ordinations and installations, they will baptize babies and break bread and pour wine.

And they will do it well. They will do it with a deep love for God, an affection for his church, and a passion for his Word. They will sit in their studies with the text open before them and they will study and pray and write. They will strive with their best efforts to be faithful to the passage and pastoral in its application. They will stand and preach, week after week, and the quirky mannerisms will fade and their voices will grow stronger and their sermons will be food for our souls.

Welcome them.

As they graduate and candidate and seek places in which to use their gifts, welcome them. Welcome them with their wonderful idealism and their dearth of experience and their tendency to bite off more than they can chew. Welcome them, for in so doing you, too, will be delighted and you, too, will be taught, and you, too, will fall in love.

Welcome them. And watch God build his church.



Rev. Mary S. Hulst is pastor of Eastern Avenue Christian Reformed Church in Grand Rapids, Mich.

Western-Christian-Muslim relations in the current crisis

A discussion with Harry Antonides, a challenge to the Reformed

Jan H. Boer

Towards the end of last year, two articles appeared in *Christian Courier*, the first, by me ("The Voice of Islam," Nov. 26, 2001); the second, by my brother Harry Antonides ("A Response..." Dec. 24, 2001). I wish to highlight some issues that surfaced in this discussion and that Christians need to be clear about in our present context. If I confused my friend Antonides, who is no slouch, what of others? So, a clear follow-up is obviously needed.

My initial article did not represent my entire evaluation of Islam or how Christians should relate to that religion. My purposes were much more limited. I first of all described the basic motivation for 9/11. An important ingredient of that motivation, I suggested, is their opposition to secularism.

Secondly, I suggested that this motivation — in distinction from the terrorist act — should find an echo in the Christian heart, especially the Reformed heart. The heirs of Abraham Kuyper should have some empathy for that motivation.

Empathy is not agreement

Empathy, however, is no synonym for agreement. The article hardly constituted a recommendation of Islam. In fact, it contained a number of disclaimers.

Antonides interprets part of my article as follows.

(1) Muslims are waging war against us.

(2) Their motivation is that the West wants to destroy them.

(3) The tools the West is using are those of colonialism and secularism.

(4) Christians are against secularism.

(5) Hence, Christians should be on the side of the Muslims.

Major Muslim convictions

Points 1-3 are indeed major Muslim convictions. And if that be the case, is it not imperative for Western Christians to understand that motivation?

If we misgauge their motivation, we will surely go wrong in our response. We might, for example, concentrate on bombing terrorist strongholds as our *major* response. It would be a virtual guarantee for a worse mess, lead to a prolongation of the crisis and probably expand into the next world war. If, on the other hand, we understand the underlying motivation, then we can at least face it

and respond appropriately. My article did not advocate these points so much as explain them as a perspective held by most Muslims. We may disagree with that perspective, but we cannot wish it away.

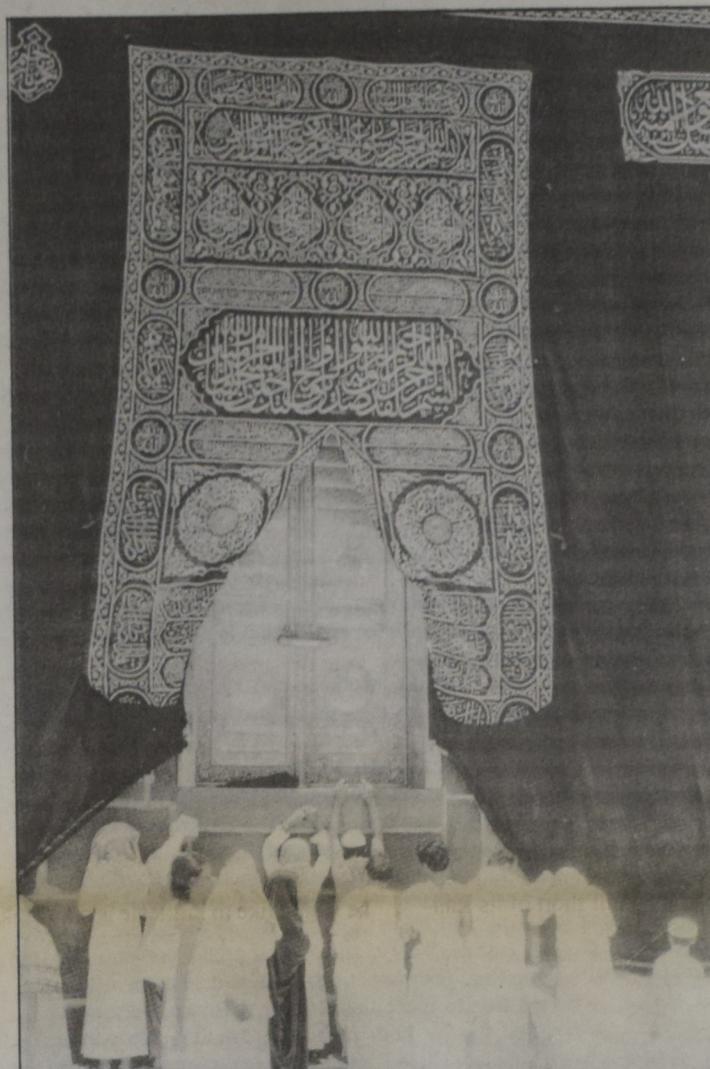
Blaming the West for trying to destroy Islam

Do Muslims have any basis for this conviction? Almost all North Americans would deny that the West aims to destroy Islam. The American government doesn't have such intentions; corporations don't; churches don't; missions don't. But Muslims are sincerely convinced of it, so much so that anyone disputing that thesis will be met with a barrage of historical facts — and some fiction as well — that she would have a hard time refuting. Look at the crusades, they will counter — wave after wave. Look how Muslims were routed out of the Iberian Peninsula and other parts of Western Europe. Look how the West colonized the Muslim world and undermined their religion with the theory and practice of secularism. All Western forces co-operated in this effort — the political, the economic and the religious.

Of course the West is not monolithic. Of course there are many forces and philosophies swirling around in the West, many of them keeping each other in check. Muslims, however, do not recognize that important fact and put us all in one basket that contains little but rotten apples.

We would do well to closely ponder this Muslim view of Western intentions. Is it not true that Western churches have sent their missionaries, including yours truly, to evangelize Muslims? From the Christian point of view that is a benign intention: It is our deepest desire to bring them to Christ and to salvation. Yes, but Muslims regard our missionary efforts as a hostile attack on the very fountains of their religion and cultures. In this they are correct. They are under attack by us. We may not regard it as an attack, let alone a hostile attack. We see our missionary approach as a benign way to spread the blessings of Abraham, but we can hardly deny Muslims their perspective on our endeavor.

The Muslim sense of being under attack is further strengthened by Western missionary and other Christian writings about Islam. Missionaries are sent by the churches, and as they campaign for



FRANK SPOONER PICTURES

The Black Stone: a holy site for Muslim pilgrims, in Mecca.

funds to support their endeavor, they publish a lot of reports and stories about Muslims. Positive and affirmative stories about Islam would hardly encourage support from the constituency. So they write negatively about Islam and about Muslims. This has gone on for years and years — a barrage of negative literature to demonize Islam. While this may be less true of ecumenicals and contemporary Roman Catholics, it is certainly true of evangelicals, including evangelicals of the Reformed tradition.

Today I randomly read the March 25, 2002, issue of *CC* and found three anti-Muslim articles. I am not condemning this literature and have produced my own quota during my missionary years. I am merely trying to emphasize that, whatever our goals, Muslims regard them as part of a campaign to destroy them.

Put yourself in their shoes

Muslim writers indicate familiarity with this kind of missionary literature. Put yourself in their shoes! How could they possibly interpret these benign intentions of

acted as a virus that has eaten away at the foundations of Muslim society and greatly weakened the community.

Revivalist Islam considers most of the so-called "moderates" as unfaithful secularized Muslims and thus regards them as traitors to Islam. This is in some way a replay of Abraham Kuyper's battle against secularism amongst Christians of his day — without the terrorist response.

The current Muslim revival has focused on this virus and its damaging effects and they are determined to overcome it, squash it, and restore their religion to its more wholistic expression.

The colonial era may be over, but it was succeeded by post-colonialism, which means economic control without the inconvenience of operating governments. Today we all, Westerners and Muslims alike, talk of globalization, which is merely a variety of the same thing as far as Muslims are concerned. It means the imposition of secular, capitalistic economic structures and methods that they consider both oppressive and non-Islamic. The oil economy is part of this picture, an economy that is marked by the presence of Western, especially American, non-Muslim forces on the holy ground of Islam. These forces are there to protect Western interests, shoring up allegedly corrupt governments, such as that of Saudi Arabia, and restraining potential "rogue" nations with threat of armed intervention. This is a terrible irritant and affront to much of revivalist Islam. Muslims ask what business do these unholy forces have in the heartland of Islam?

A persecution complex

In addition, Muslims have two tendencies that add fuel to the fire. One is their strong inclination towards extreme paranoia or a persecution complex. They tend to see an enemy behind every tree that is just waiting in the wings to destroy them. The second is their very human inclination to judge others by their own standards. Since violence and destruction continues to mark their relationship with others, they rather easily impute their own motivation to others. They are blind to the fact that they accuse others of what they do themselves. Add these tendencies to what they see the West doing, and you end up with a recipe for extreme anger and lust for revenge that will not be bottled up indefinitely.

The question about what business the West has on Muslim

Continued on page 11...

Islam/Agriculture

... continued from page 10

soil is a good question even for us Western Christians. Well, we know the *business* that we have there: largely oil to support our wasteful use of energy. *Our question should be what right does the West have to be there* in this particular mode. Can we give any *Christian* justification for a presence that provokes so much hostility and that totally messes up any Christian witness we think we are presenting there? What Western people would tolerate the presence of foreign forces on their soil that are there solely to protect foreign economic interests?

Let's take the beam out of our own eyes

While I am fully aware of Muslim intolerance, persecution and discrimination against women, non-Muslims and a host of other no-nos, there is yet another teaching of our Lord that applies here. We are advised to take the beam out of our own eyes before we work on the Muslim sliver. Regardless of Islam's oppressive policies, in this context it is incumbent upon us Christians to search our own behavior at every level. Have we demonstrated the Gospel to them or have we simply jumped on the secular bandwagons of Western economic and political policies without subjecting them to the searchlight of the Kingdom? Have we demonstrated *justice* in the Muslim world?

Muslims are accusing the West as a whole of being bent on destroying them. Christians want to convert and save them, but Muslims see that as destruction. Westerners, including Christians, put various economic and military structures in place on Muslim soil to protect Western interests in oil, especially. But can we really, before the Lord, justify forcing ourselves upon those nations to force, cajole or trick them into submissive co-operation? Can we not understand something of their outcries? Would we want them to treat us similarly?

Antonides agrees (point 4) that Christians should not embrace secularism but encourage the practice of Christian principles in all spheres of life. It is a principle he has honorably and doggedly pursued throughout his enviable career with the Christian Labour Association of Canada. Here the Reformed share a common enemy with Islam. Muslim descriptions of secularism could come straight out of the writings of the Institute for Christian Studies in Toronto and its constituency.

Antonides concludes that I

advocate in my earlier article that because we share this common enemy, "we should be on the side of the Muslims" (point 5). This is a misinterpretation. Sharing a common enemy is hardly the same as full identification or agreement. There are and will be many core differences between Christianity and Islam as long as both religions remain true to themselves.

Christians should listen carefully to Muslims

But what does it mean to "be on the side of the Muslims"? Does it mean being anti-West? Does it mean advocating terrorism against the U.S.? Does it mean accepting the Muslim package hook, line and sinker? Christian objectivity and fairness demand that we listen carefully to the Muslim point of view and accept what is true in it while rejecting the false. We must always test the spirits and reserve the right, no, stronger, exercise the obligation to be critical of both sides in a conflict. Our citizenship in the Kingdom of God prevents us from simply supporting the policies and practices of our own nations or people when they fall short of its standards. This obligation to be critical becomes more important as the seriousness of the conflict grows.

If my analysis of the Muslim motivation underlying the current crisis is correct, then we owe it to our governments, corporations, other relevant parties and to ourselves to develop a response that hits the central issues and solves the core problems. I am hesitant to deny the need for smoking out the terrorists and for the bombing. I do deny that this bombing hits the core of the issues.

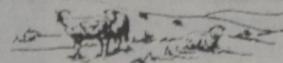
Christians should demand that our governments and corporations sit down with Muslims to explore the issues raised in this article honestly and courageously with a view to developing new relations and new respect for Islam and its people. They are not by nature an unreasonable people. For many centuries, they far outshone the Christian West in tolerating other cultures and religions. They need to be respected — and not coerced into subservience.

I am not sure our secular governments can muster the spirituality this search for new relationships with Islam demands. As Paul Marshall has observed at various times, secularism is traditionally handicapped in understanding matters spiritual and religious. I believe that churches or constituencies that share a central point of contact with Islam such as their common rejection of secularism have a special duty to help their own governments

Choosing to live in Next Year Country

COUNTRY COUNTERCULTURE

VERN M. GLEDDIE



up in the corporate world. But, "I never wanted to do anything other than farm," he surprised his parents with last year.

Something else to fall back on

As our children finished high school, I advised them to pursue options besides farming simply because farming was already becoming an expensive proposition, with low and fluctuating financial returns. I never advised them to avoid farming but to have something else to fall back on. Three seem happy to have discovered other occupations, but one, it seems, must farm.

I would not advise my son against farming. He knows what is involved. I would not advise him to stake his whole future on it either. Murray I wouldn't try to dissuade from his pursuit either, since I think he has good qualities for the occupation, but I want to try to put across to him the dangers and difficulties.

I can relate to these young men and their desire to be on the land. We, too, with two young children and leaving a good government job, moved to a small farm north of Edmonton 32 years ago with not much more than a desire to do what it took to make a living farming or ranching (my preference).

Land valued in the Bible

What drives people to have such a love for the land and the outdoors? It would be difficult to sort out the complex motivations. I would be satisfied to simply say that is the way God has made some of us. It is evident from reading the Bible that land is an important aspect of virtually every family's existence. Every 50 years in Israel, land that had changed hands was required to revert to the original owner. The production from the land was important to God as the means of feeding people. It was not a commodity to be put to whatever use commanded the highest dollar value.

Society has, to its detriment, forgotten a lot of eternal wisdom. Therefore, a young farming hopeful who has counted the cost should have the opportunity of serving God by doing what he or she loves to do.



Vern Gleddie has a sheep ranch near Edmonton, Alta.

towards the development of such new relations.

Challenging the Reformed community

I am not ready to propose how we should go about this. I challenge the Reformed community to rise to this unique occasion. *Christian Courier* should invite knowledgeable parties to embark on a serious discussion on this crucial issue, to exchange ideas with a view to encouraging readers to take

up the cudgel in their own Christian community or its broader assemblies and their representatives in the federal government. Citizens for Public Justice and the Christian Reformed Office for Social Justice ought to take up the issue as an emergency. There are a host of other Christian organizations out there, denominational, ecumenical and independent (parachurch), that need to do the same — and then share with everyone. Some are already doing so, but they don't share

sufficiently. This must lead to action. This is an emergency.

Note: Dr. Jan Boer is former Director of the Institute of Church & Society in Jos, Nigeria. Living in Vancouver, B.C., he is currently doing research in and writing on Christian-Muslim relations. His website address is: www.SocialTheology.com

Faith & Writing

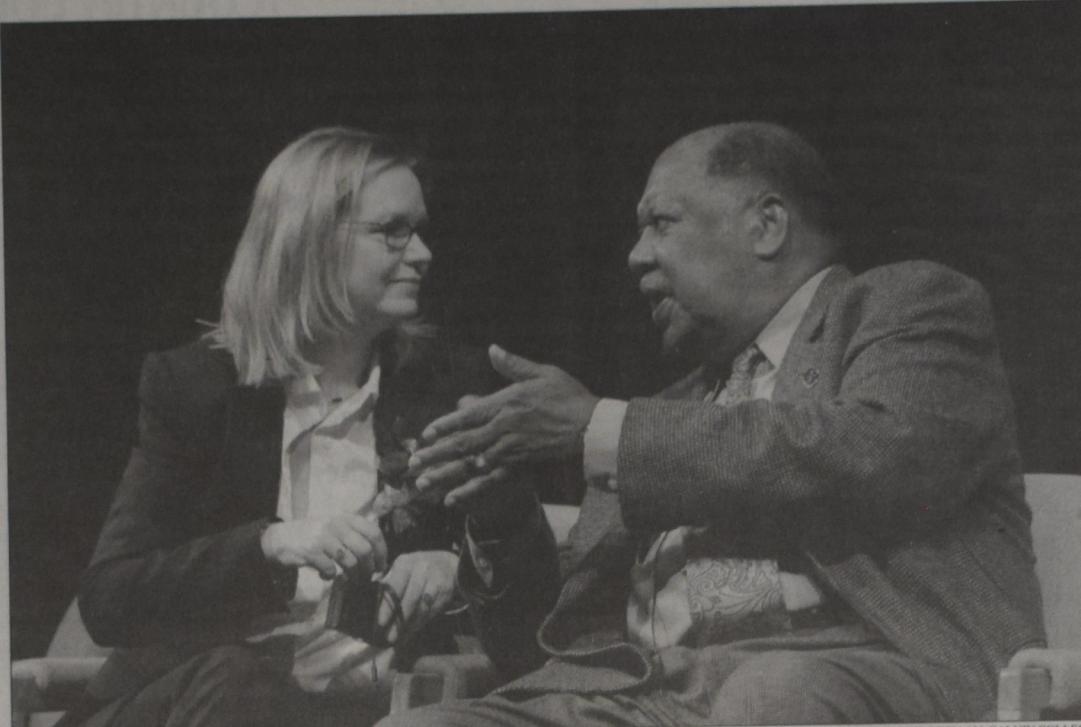
Festival of Faith & Writing: a personal visit

Abe Huyser-Honig

Close to 100 authors and editors, more than 50 publishing houses and journals and 1,500 aspiring writers, teachers and literature enthusiasts took over the campus of Calvin College April 18-20 during Calvin's biennial Festival of Faith and Writing, one of America's largest literary conferences. With six keynote speakers, (including several Pulitzer Prize winners and several whose books have been featured on Oprah Winfrey's book club), lectures and panel discussions covering topics from journalism to illustration, two concerts and a play, the festival offered an almost overwhelming number of opportunities for registrants.

Excitement in the air

It's come a long way since its first incarnation a dozen years ago, when just 100 people gathered in an auditorium to discuss their shared loves of faith and literature. At noon on Thursday I sat in Calvin's Fine Arts Center among hundreds of other registrants, waiting expectantly for Calvin English professor Dale Brown, the mastermind behind the event, to officially open the conference. The air was thick with excitement as he stepped onto the stage and welcomed everyone. "This conference was created by readers, for readers," he said.



PHOTOS COURTESY PHIL DE HAAN, CALVIN COLLEGE

One highlight of the conference was a discussion between Kaye Gibbons (left) and Ernest Gaines (right) about their shared experiences of writing and living in the South.

Explaining that the positions the authors took on faith ranged from those who went to church every Sunday to those who perhaps grew up in the church but had now drifted away, Brown emphasized that "we can learn from everyone across the spectrum."

Brown was followed by Calvin Professor of English emeritus

Henry Baron, who gave the stage to poet Scott Cairns, a regular at the festival. Unfortunately other duties called me away from hearing the man Cairns introduced, Pulitzer-prize-winning poet Stephen Dunn.

But at 1:45 I was back into the festival activities, now watching the first outside-of-New York production of the play *As It Is In Heaven*. Directed by Calvin communication arts and sciences professor Stephanie Sandberg, who was a major collaborator in the play's writing, the all-female cast offered a beautiful portrayal of life in a Shaker village in the middle of the 19th century.

A subversive playwright

"I'm a subversive playwright," said playwright Arlene Hutton in a discussion afterwards. "How many new plays are there with no four-letter words, a reading of the beatitudes, singing the Lord's prayer, and a foot-washing ceremony?"

After a break for dinner I headed to Sunshine church, whose auditorium-like sanctuary (complete with comfortably upholstered chairs) the festival's directors had deemed a better venue for keynote speeches than the formerly used Calvin Fieldhouse, with its hard, backless bleachers.

Kaye Gibbons, the North Carolinian author of such books as *On the Occasion of My Last Afternoon* and the Oprah-endorsed *Ellen Foster*, delivered a lively, rambling discourse touching on everything

from her family life to her views on art. Gibbons said she was greatly inspired by the King James Bible, (particularly since the only other books in her house as she grew up were a hog-castration manual, a history of shipwrecks and an encyclopedia set).

"It's not the story that held me most" although the miracles and adultery tales did fascinate me," she quipped. "Instead it was the language, the rhythm, the cadence." Gibbons tied together her musings, jokes, and tangents with a final exhortation to, "be kind and do your best."

Back on campus I could feel the rhythms of Christian rap artists L.A. Symphony pulsing from the auditorium as I cut through the Fine Arts Center on my way back to my room, too tired and full of things to ponder to add a concert to my already over-satiated cultural appetite. I was back soon enough. At 9:00 the next morning I chose among several options to hear novelist Ron Hansen, another author who had been inspired by the language of the King James Bible. Citing Jesus' use of parables, Hansen said that faith and storytelling go hand in hand. "We have a tendency to separate heaven and earth, soul and body, mind and matter," he said. Hansen also read *My Communist*, a touching short story he wrote about the strange friendship that develops between a Polish priest sent as a missionary to California in the 1980s and the communist spy who shadows him.

My next stop was listening to children's-book illustrator Tim

Ladwig explain the methods and inspirations behind such works as his illustrated version of the Lord's Prayer. This "picture parable" gives new meaning to familiar words by visually comparing our relationship with Our Father in Heaven to a young African American girl's relationship to her father. After lunch I listened to Peggy Payne, a novelist, former travel writer and another North Carolinian, talk about the process of writing her most recent novel *Sister India*. Set in the Hindu holy city of Varanasi, the plot is based on a riot between Hindus and Muslims that kept Payne under curfew for two weeks while she was doing research there. As she showed slides of her trip to Varanasi, Payne described her fascination with the intensity of religion in Indian culture. "It's like the South, where people can ask 'Where do you go?' and everyone knows they're talking about church," she said.

Media underrates religious news

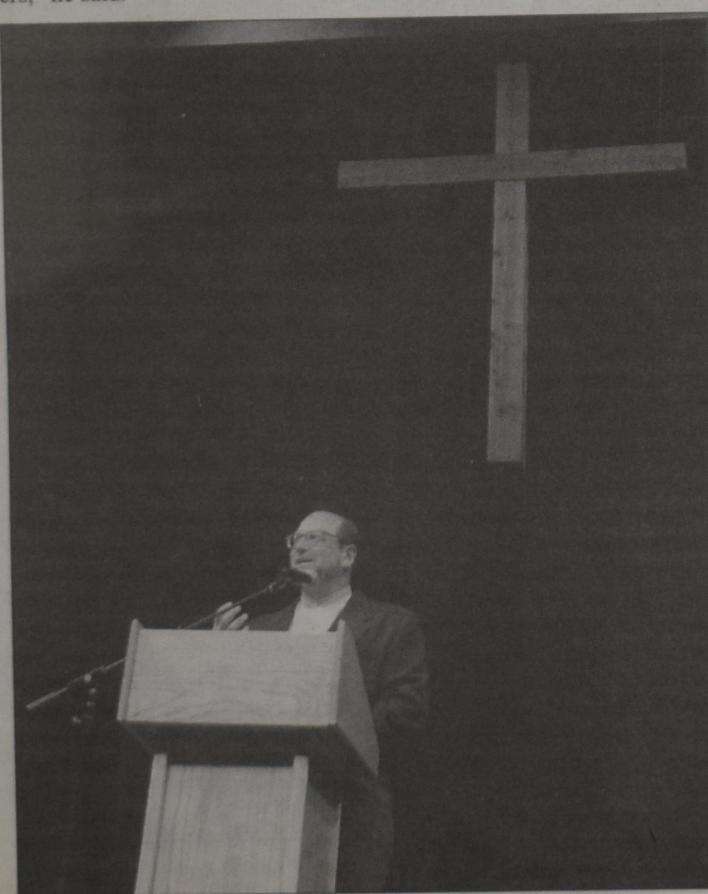
Charles Honey (religion editor at the Grand Rapids Press) and Terry Mattingly (author of the syndicated newspaper column "On Religion") were next on the agenda. Mattingly, a member of the Eastern Orthodox Church, talked about the undervaluing and under-representation of religious news in the media, placing much of the blame on the scarcity of journalism programs in Christian colleges.

Honey described how his job had led him to see the importance of religion in people's lives: "There's never been a beat more interesting or rewarding."

Friday night's keynote speaker was award-winning author Ernest Gaines, whose books are mostly set in the same area of rural Louisiana where he grew up. In his speech, Gaines concentrated on his novel *A Lesson Before Dying*, explaining how historical events and personal experiences contributed to the process of writing the novel and reading excerpts. "I try to develop characters with character, and in so doing develop my own character and hopefully the character of my readers," he said.

I stuck around for a brief discussion between Gaines and Gibbons on their shared experiences of writing and living in the South, then hopped on a shuttle bus back to campus to catch the Patty Griffin concert. Though I missed the opening act, Austin-based Griffin and her band put on a show by itself well worth the \$5 ticket.

I started Saturday morning with a keynote address in the



The keynote speech by Oscar Hijuelos (above) was the festival's grand finale.

Faith & Writing/Social Justice

Fieldhouse by Kathleen Norris, a poet and nonfiction writer whose religious reflections in such books as *The Cloister Walk*, *Amazing Grace*, and *Dakota* have become bestsellers in the mainstream market. Norris spent most of the lecture reading her poems, which often tie religious imagery to events in her personal life and that of her family, and also read from some other up-and-coming poets who she wanted to promote. "Poetry works its way through the poet in mysterious ways," she said, comparing the act of writing to a

gardener's act of planting seeds. After the five-lectures-and-a-concert of the previous day, I was a little worn out and decided to take a break until the Festival's final event, a keynote address at 8:00 pm by Oscar Hijuelos, author of *Mr. Ives' Christmas* and the Pulitzer Prize-winning *The Mambo Kings Play Songs of Love*.

He was definitely the right choice for the grand finale. Twenty minutes into a straightforward speech about how his Catholic background affected his writing, he suddenly noticed a glass of

water on the podium and exclaimed, "Oh, vodka!" After that, a steady flow of wisecracks punctuated a fascinating exposition of his religious views. "I don't go to church every Sunday but I do get stigmata," he joked, going on to explain, "I write about Catholicism, faith, the nebulous above, out of sheer fondness for the characters who believe such things."

Reverence and fascination

Concerning his own religious beliefs, Hijuelos expressed reverence and fascination for "the

magicality, the intense, beautiful, blood-thick way of feeling I get when I'm in a church." He also said that he felt like there was always a presence accompanying him through his life and writings. After a brief Q&A session with the audience, including giving recommendations of good mambo records, Hijuelos retired and Calvin English professor Chip Pollard took the stage to thank everyone for coming to the Festival of Faith and Writing and to invite them back for its next appearance.

I wolfed down a couple pieces

of cake at the following reception and caught the bus back to campus, reflecting on all I had learned and wondering what newly made friends I would see again and what new authors and artists I would meet in 2004.

Calvin College sophomore Abe Huyser-Honig is an English major and was on the Festival of Faith & Writing planning committee. He hopes to work as a journalist after graduation.

Social justice advocate inspires King's students

Elise Stolte

A long-time advocate for social justice, Gerald Vandezande, called on Christian students and institutions in Edmonton last month to become more actively involved in public life.

"Too often, universities today only deal with things in an academic way and are not in touch with what goes on in government and culture," says Vandezande.

"We need to present positive proposals of the new light we have in Christ and in the resurrection spirit," said Vandezande, as he encouraged students, faculty and supporters at The King's University College to take a more assertive place in the development of Christian thought and cultural interaction. The 68-year-old lived with students for four days in The King's residence, sharing his passion for public justice in the classroom and the cafeteria.

Encouraging and motivating students

Named to the Order of Canada last year for his commitment to society's underprivileged, Vandezande actively lobbied the politically powerful for 40 years as a director of Citizens for Public Justice. His trip to Edmonton had several purposes — to meet again with faithful supporters, to encourage and motivate students, and to see what kind of Christian cultural presence the university is seeking to be.

Every day, Vandezande shared from his experience and stressed "Change comes through the shared core values of concerned



COURTESY ELISE STOLTE

Gerald Vandezande (right) and King's student Bronwyn Martin engage in a discussion.

communities who are active in the service of justice for all." As he addressed students who have barely begun their lives of service, they listened because the man clearly has done what he says.

Robert Brink praised Vandezande's commitment to justice. "Often, people — Christians included — get involved in politics to look after their own interests rather than seeing politics as a way to do justice to everyone, including those who fall through the cracks."

Vandezande's message hit home with the third-year political science student.

"We have to be for things, not just against things or we will continually force ourselves onto the sidelines. Too often, activists speak out against things like pollution, abortion, or globalization but they don't bring any positive solutions to the table."

Second-year environmental studies student, Gerda Kits, found Vandezande's words relevant and empowering. "You don't always

have to totally reject the way society thinks and the words they speak but can build on their thoughts and expand them, deepening the language to include Christian values. Even if politicians are not Christians they still have many of the same values we do. If you can get them to act on those values, you can make change happen."

Refreshingly simple

Second-year student, Kimberly Tomiyama, of the same discipline, said Vandezande's message was refreshingly simple in the land of academia. "It's easy to get caught up in all the ideas out there," she said, "but when people get too caught up in small particulars, they lose the big picture that is actually very simple. Summarized in the cross, it is the very gospel we stand on."

To Vandezande, Tomiyama's experience in university education reflects a common problem. "Too often, universities today only deal

with things in an academic way and are not in touch with what goes on in government and culture. They are removed from the reality of what needs to be transformed and focus instead on an abstract way of learning."

Political science professor, Dr. John Hiemstra also acknowledges the problem. As one way to make studies relevant, he would like to see someone like Vandezande come in once a month to interact with students and share their lifework. "It's really good as a community to have the opportunity to learn from senior members, those without PhDs but who are out in the field."

Life-affirming view of justice

Vandezande says his political and social actions flow from a "Christian faith commitment, rooted in a life-affirming view of justice." The message he brings back from the field is straightforward. He warns against what he calls a spiritualized Gospel, where people separate spirituality from everyday life, thus becoming ineffective players in the public square.

"Secularism is born in the churches," he says, explaining that faith gets eliminated from the public realm only when churches make that separation and students don't take their faith to their careers. His challenge to the students at King's is to believe what they confess and to apply it to their studies — that the whole world belongs to God.

The benefits and encouragement from Vandezande's visit

came to both parties. "I always want to be in touch with the young people," he said. "The turmoil in the minds of the younger generation can show us where our witness is lacking." For many students, Vandezande's visit offered motivation and clarity. "I don't hesitate to push students," he says and freely gives out his philosophy: "'No' you've got, go after the 'Yes.'"

Called them to action

"He called us to take action for justice," says Bronwyn Martin, a third-year history major. "He really believes we can accomplish something significant."

Chris Mcatcher, a second-year environmental science student, said: "It's neat to see someone who's been involved in the system for so many years come out still hopeful."

For Adam Huygen, third-year environmental studies student, "The visit fed a fire that I already have within me to make a difference in people's lives."

Though retired since 1999, Vandezande continues to be involved in advocacy from Toronto as a volunteer spokesperson for the National Campaign Against Child Poverty, which advocates federal and provincial policy changes to promote the well-being of children, families and homeless people. His most recent book is entitled *Justice, Not Just Us: Faith Perspectives and National Priorities* (Public Justice Resource Centre).

For Vandezande, public action is about "establishing personal, working relationships with key political and media figures and proposing alternatives to the individualist, materialist society that marginalizes the poor and treats humans only as consumers."

Society

Soup-kitchen theology

Berta Hosmar

It seems that every time we turn on the news, the world in which we live has become more chaotic and dangerous. Right now the whole world seems to be holding its collective breath while watching the situation in the Middle East. Is Israel going to withdraw its troops from the West Bank? Are the suicide bombings going to stop?

What about the situation in Afghanistan and in so many other trouble spots around the globe? Has the tension between India and Pakistan eased somewhat? Are we racing towards World War III? Only a quick reminder that "He's got the whole world in his hands" can calm our fears.

Original, yet so profound

Several years ago one simple-minded, unemployed man gave me a lesson in how to deal with the world's problems. His reasoning was so original, yet so profound, that I still chuckle when I think of him. The news then wasn't any more uplifting than it is now. At the time I was a volunteer at a local Christian Drop-In Centre for street people. I also volunteered occasionally at the adjoining Soup Kitchen, where I often met the same people I worked with at the Centre.

One particular afternoon I wasn't exactly in a jubilant mood while getting ready to serve dinner to a group of people, several of whom, in unkind words, might be described as "losers" in today's society. The news the night before had been particularly disturbing and had haunted me in my dreams. The screen had shown starving people in the Sudan. One little boy, close to death, a world of suffering in his sunken eyes, was too weak to shoo the flies away that were crawling in his nostrils. A commentator described how horrifying it was that India and Pakistan now boasted nuclear weapons.

"Let's not kid ourselves," he predicted. "It's more than likely that within a few years the people of these countries, who hate each other even more than the Palestinians and the Jews in Israel hate each other, will use those weapons to incinerate each other. The fallout will affect the whole world. If people thought the missile crisis in Cuba back in the sixties was scary, then brace yourselves: this situation is far more dangerous."

I remembered the destruction when our town was bombed during World War II. Compared to today's weapons, those bombs were children's toys. "What kind of a future do our children and grandchildren have?" I worried.



ANN MARIE ROUSSEAU

When I looked at the people around me, that rather motley crowd, I marveled that in this environment I'd been told by a simple-minded man to have a simple faith.

But there wasn't time for more depressing thoughts, for the door of the Soup Kitchen opened and the first group of people found seats and expected to be served promptly. Quickly we grabbed our trays and filled them with glasses of water, bowls of soup, buns and salads. We collected tickets, which the clients could buy for one dollar, and we were in business.

Hard to serve with a smile

The first hour was always hectic, and we hardly had time to chat with our customers. Most people were polite, but some made it difficult to serve them with a smile. Remarks like: "I don't like this meat, don't you have chicken?" or "When is my dessert coming, I already asked you twice!" were not uncommon.

Perhaps some felt that here, in this "restaurant," they could order others around. Living on welfare or unemployment insurance or disability pensions, sometimes homeless, always poor, they were not always treated with respect by society. Here they had paid for their meal, so they felt the need to assert themselves. One female customer told me indignantly: "Miss, I'm allergic to water, I need milk." I explained that milk was only served to children and pregnant women.

"Well, can't you see I'm pregnant?" she said angrily. Noticing that she was at least 65, I found this a little hard to believe, but I wasn't going to argue. Being called, "Miss," while I'm a grandmother, was rather flattering.

When it became a little less busy we had time to chat with some customers. I noticed a frantic young mother of five trying to feed a one-year-old, while the rest of her shabbily-dressed brood kept wandering away from the table, ignoring her sharp commands to sit down and eat. Charlie, at another table, was sitting all by himself.

I had known Charlie for several years, for he was a regular client at the Drop-In Centre. A chronic alcoholic, he had lost his family and his once-prosperous business. When he was somewhat sober, which was seldom, he had a delightful personality. Today he told me cheerfully that the weather was beautiful, the food delicious, the waitresses gorgeous, and would I go home with him tonight? Home was a small room above a store, but listening to Charlie had lifted my mood.

Then Philip entered, dressed in a black suit and black tie, and carrying a plastic briefcase. His pants were about two inches too short, and he wore runners without laces, but he was neat and clean. My first encounter with Philip had happened a few weeks earlier, while I was volunteering at the Drop-In Centre. Philip was a drifter, who never stayed long in one town, or province. He had lived out East, but was now on his way to British Columbia, for he had heard that the welfare payments were higher in that province.

"How will you get there, by bus or train or plane?" I had asked him; doubtful that he had enough

money to travel.

"Hitchhiking of course," he had told me, confident that things would work out. But we did not have this conversation until a few weeks after I had met him.

Unusual first meeting

Our first meeting had been rather unusual. Many people clean out their closets in the spring, and often bring their discarded clothing to the centre. On certain days these clothes are displayed on the counters and people can help themselves.

One of my friends gave me a beautiful winter coat and added a pair of dress shoes and a matching leather purse. "I have had these for such a long time that I am sick of them," she told me. "Just make sure you give them to a really needy person." I promised, but was not prepared for the elegantly-dressed lady, with dark, curly hair. She was wearing high heels, bright-red nail polish, lipstick and a dress that fit a little too tightly around her ample bosom. She immediately went to the stack of clothing, and picked out my friend's offerings.

She tried the coat on, took the purse, and stepped into the shoes. She then pirouetted in front of me, and I had to admit that she looked rather stunning. Only when she introduced herself as Philippina and I heard her deep, masculine voice, did I realize that SHE was really a HE. Philippina was a man. I did not have the nerve to tell her that these clothes should go to a

real woman.

About a week later a bald, middle-aged, shabbily dressed man greeted me at the centre, and introduced himself as Philip. "Last week and the week before I was Philippina, but the Lord healed me and I'm Philip again," he told me cheerfully. I tried hard to hide my surprise and asked him: "What did you do with that nice coat and the shoes and the purse? Would you give them back so we can help somebody else?"

"Nope," Philip stated happily. "I sold them for five dollars to a friend."

What was he up to this time?

Today Philip, good-natured as always, demanded a meal and asked me to serve him. I noticed his briefcase and wondered what he was up to this time.

"I have a job," he told me. "I'm going into full-time ministry, starting this afternoon. I might even stay in town for a few weeks. The Lord wants me to be a preacher. I've got some sermons and tracts in my briefcase. I took them from different churches this morning. I'm sure they don't mind."

"That explains his suit and tie," I thought. Philip wasted no time in starting his new vocation. He handed me a pamphlet. "If you die today, where will you go?" it asked in big, bold letters.

Philip asked me, "Did you watch the news last night? It made me decide to become a pastor. Do you know that Armageddon is just around the corner? This paper tells you not to be afraid."

"Yes, I watched the news last night, and it made me upset," I confessed.

"Why?" Philip wondered. "I don't get upset! Sure, we may get a war soon, but the good Lord won't let it happen until it's his time. And when that time comes, we'll get a brand-new world with no wars or hungry children or sick people. The Bible says so. In the meantime, you just have to do your job. Look at me. That's what I'm going to do. Telling people to love Jesus and to hate Satan. Easy. Nothing to it."

And after this speech, Philip took a big bite of apple pie and considered his mission accomplished. But when I looked at the people around me, that rather motley crowd, I marveled that in this environment I'd been told by a simple-minded man to have a simple faith.

Berta Hosmar lives in Whitby, Ont.

Opinion/News/Sports

A preview of CRCNA Synod 2002

Morris Greidanus

Once, before preaching on Lord's Day 30 of the Heidelberg Catechism (the one that calls the Romans Catholic Mass a "condemnable idolatry"), I called a priest I knew well and asked: "Dennis, which part of this answer describes how you look at the mass?" I read the answer to him, and he chose the first part that describes how we view the Lord's Supper!

Now a sub-committee of the CRC Inter-church Relations Committee (IRC) has held two meetings with top Roman Catholic theologians to discuss Answer 80 some more. In 20 fine pages they report their findings that Answer 80 may not state the RC view correctly. They suggest a careful method of double-checking; then the Catechism may need to be changed.

Confessional issues

This is just one of the confessional issues before the 2002 synod. Living Hope CRC, Peterborough has a difficulty with "he descended into hell" in the Creed and proposes a change to "the realm of the dead" with changes in the Catechism to suit. Classis Chatham wants to "detest the error of the Anabaptists" (Belgic Confession, art. 34) in a footnote rather than in the body of the article.

Inter-church relations will get major attention this year. The CRC was terminated from the North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council (NAPARC) because of the women-in-office issue. An overture from Grand Rapids East, which last year asked

for a move towards the Protestant Reformed Church, now asks that "organic unity" with the Reformed Church in America be explored. And the IRC is ready with a recommendation to join the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC), which would put the CRC in touch with a 4½-page world-wide list of Reformed churches.

Pastoral concerns evident

Pastoral concerns are evident in a report from the Youth-Ministry committee which urges each Classis to appoint a youth ministry consultant. The study committee on Pastoral Care of Homosexual Members offers 25 pages of advice for use by the churches in their ministry. It encourages the church to do what it promised in 1973, breaks no new ground, but notes along the way that it would be wise if the church would do more exegesis of the relevant texts. Pastor-Church Relations hopes that it can add a staff person to work in prevention and education for clergy and congregations.

Finances a big concern

But that depends on finances which are a big concern this year. The church's Board of Trustees reports that shortages made it shift some ministry share allocations between agencies. No new staff have been hired. World Relief reports a shortfall. World Missions has fewer long-term missionaries. *The Banner* is going to a monthly edition; its editor may even become half-time. And overtures from Alberta North and Holland are asking for a good look at the ministry-share system and how it

relates to local ministry and income.

Controversial issues rare

Controversial issues seem rare this year, except that NAPARC raises all the old objections to women in office, and identical overtures from Lake Erie and Grand Rapids East ask that women could serve as synodical deputies where acceptable. Classis Eastern Canada suggests national instead of classical abuse-response teams. A Denominational Ministries Plan contains discussable material on reformed identity which could occupy an adult education group for some months. Seven of the 13 overtures before synod ask for the transfer of a Korean-speaking church to Classis Pacific Hanmi which conducts its business in Korean. Not hard to call!

A sleeper may be the Sermons for Reading Services committee, which publishes the Living Word series (mainly used in Canada). It will make sermons available in electronic format on the CRCNA web site by September 2002. Various ethnic languages will soon be added. Any elder needing to read a sermon can log on to www.crena.org and get one. But so could the whole congregation! And stay home?



Morris Greidanus is a Canadian-American living in Grand Rapids, Mich. who has served at First CRC, Grand Rapids since 1985.

Fiery fundamentalist Carl McIntire dies

VOORHEES, N.J. (EP) — Carl McIntire, a fiery fundamentalist preacher whose multimillion-dollar ministry struggled during his battles with the FCC and with other Christian leaders, died March 19. He was 95. McIntire was ordained in the Presbyterian Church (USA), but the denomination withdrew his ordination in 1935 after finding him guilty of "sowing dissension in the church." That finding was based on his attacks on what he called liberal leanings in the denomination.

McIntire's congregation withdrew from the denomination and founded the Presbyterian Church of America. Soon, McIntire determined that the new denomination was also too liberal, and left to start yet another denomination, the

Bible Presbyterian Church. From 1938 to 1998 he was pastor of the Bible Presbyterian Church in Collingswood, N.J. He was also the president of the International Council of Christian Churches, an organization of conservative fundamentalist churches.

From his church's headquarters in New Jersey, McIntire broadcast a half-hour radio program, "The 20th Century Reformation Hour," which during the 1960s was heard on as many as 600 stations throughout the U.S. and Canada. On the program, McIntire presented fundamentalist Christian doctrine and ultra-conservative political commentary, tackling such issues as communist infiltration of the government, homosexuality, liberal leanings of churches,

fluoridation of water, modernism and socialism.

In 1973, McIntire lost his radio license for failure to abide by the FCC's fairness doctrine, which requires stations to make airtime available for responsible opposing views on political issues. The loss of his stations contributed to a decline in ministry revenue and influence.

"I think you'd have to say that he was the most consistent fundamentalist of the 20th century," the Rev. Martin Marty, a University of Chicago religion scholar, told the *Philadelphia Inquirer*. "Whatever he decided was the truth he followed to the very end, no matter how few friends or colleagues were left."

After the Buzzer

Tim Antonides



Living room rage

I come from a long line of stoics. I save my public expressions of emotion for the freeway. The rest of the time, I'm happily repressing and denying any feeling that might make somebody else uncomfortable. All the Antonides kids are like that. As my little brother likes to joke, "It's so much better to ignore your feelings and let them compress into a tight little ball." This philosophy doesn't quite pass muster with most psychologists, but it's how we operate.

Playoff hockey time is different. During the usually short duration that the Canucks are in the playoffs, I'm a basket case. During the course of a game, I go through the same pattern: The Canucks open the scoring (bliss-filled joy). The Canucks get scored on 30 seconds later (whining rage). Canucks get scored on again (horror, then inconsolable sorrow). Canucks get scored on yet again (soul-wrenching despair). Canucks tie it up with two quick goals (sweet, majestic hope). Canucks get scored on with one minute left (betrayal, certifiably deranged fury). Canucks lose (denial of my existence, accompanied by burning shame).

Living and dying by the Lions

This is nothing new. Only a few months ago it seems, I was living and dying by the B.C. Lions. During my college summer breaks, I breathed Lions football. I can remember tree planting in northern B.C. when the Lions were playing the Winnipeg Blue Bombers in the Western Final. My comrades and I put in a full day's worth of heat, black flies, and mosquitoes. It kept us going to know that we'd be able to listen to the game when we got back to camp. The party the boys had that night after the Lions won would make a frat house look like High Tea in Nottinghamshire.

The Canucks' cycle of despair is what really throws me for a loop, though. Although it frightens my loved ones, this emotional cycle will be repeated again the following April. What's going on? Am I so insecure that I have to channel the few legitimate emotions I have through some artificial medium like a hockey game? Could I be so shallow as to reserve my true feelings for a bunch of guys chasing around a puck on skates? I'm either a really pathetic clown or there is something very insidious at work here.

It's all about identity

I think it's the latter. It's all about identity. As believers, we belong to Jesus. He has claimed us. As glorious as that is, I can't help but allow a small part of me to try and find meaning in something worldly like a sports team. The Canucks are real. They are human beings with human characteristics. They represent the place where I've chosen to live. I love that place. I want it to succeed. I want it to come out ahead over some other place in North America (especially a place like Detroit that calls itself "Hockeytown"). As fleeting as that win might be, it is tangible.

Sad it is. But if you think about it, are most of us any different? Almost all of us think we live in the best place on earth. When I was at college, I thought all people from the U.S. Midwest were arrogant and so cocksure about their motherland. Then I met people from Iowa who had the same experiences from meeting Canadians. I don't care where you're from. To you, it's paradise. When there's competition between your little corner of the world and another's, your passions flare up. Joy and rage become bedfellows.

If only I was as passionate in most of the other parts of my life.



Tim Antonides teaches Grade 8 and is a basketball coach at Surrey Christian School in Surrey, B.C.

News

Much about Russia to love, say Hellemans



PHOTOS COURTESY ADRIAN AND WENDY HELLEMANS

A newly-opened "gymnasium," and a new generation of students: the hope of Russia's future.

... continued from page 3
affordable entertainment.

There is much to love about Russia: its people, its literature, and its love for education, to name a few examples. These probably will never change entirely, although all of them are under attack. The population is steadily declining, as is the life expectancy of men, due in large part to alcoholism. Half of all Russian men die of alcohol-related causes. Alcohol is also responsible for the abuse that is endemic.

After the lifting of censorship with *perestroika*, the publishing industry is flourishing, although the costs of books have increased enormously even with lower publication costs. With large government subsidies, they used to be inexpensive and thus could be published more rapidly. This will soon change. Prices are quickly creeping up to what they are in the West.

Quality of educational system declining

Education is still valued highly, yet the quality of the educational system is declining. The best Russian students are as good as students anywhere, but the infrastructure is in a state of disrepair. It badly needs an infusion of funds that are not available. Remarkably, many of these students can and do excel. The problem is that there are, as elsewhere, mediocre students who expect to graduate with a minimum of effort. In the past, the system tolerated this. How long this attitude can continue, no one knows, but there are signs of change in this area.

Business schools are springing up like mushrooms. The number of students applying to business programs at universities is increasing rapidly, while other faculties, including philosophy, enjoy less

student interest than in the past. The percentage of students that are accepted into each faculty has changed significantly the last few years.

Memorization the norm

Yet, much has not changed at the university. There is little evidence yet of changes in teaching methods; professors deliver lectures at dictation speed to students who dutifully copy them down in order to regurgitate them on examination day. Critical thinking was never taught during the Soviet period and still not encouraged; instead, memorization is the norm. The faculty are overworked and underpaid; typically professors need to hold down two or three jobs in order to make ends meet. And students listen to lectures for many more hours per week than do their counterparts in North America.

Russia has major problems that will not be quickly solved. Aside even from alcoholism, which is a symptom of a much deeper malaise, we can list the absence or, at least, underdevelopment of civil society, rule of law, and morality. Amorality is endemic. That is not surprising, since morality in the Soviet period was imposed from the top and was often not internalized. Now there seems to be a moral vacuum, similar to what existed in the period of Judges when "everyone did as they saw right." Without real improvement in morality, democracy will remain a pipe dream. And the chief agency capable of teaching morality is the church.

Christians in Russia

The Christian Church has existed in Russia for more than a thousand years. Orthodoxy is dominant, just as the Catholic Church

is in other parts of the world. The Russian Orthodox Church, while not the state church, functions as such in many ways. It receives privileges denied to other Christian denominations. For example, it receives tax concessions that others do not. Under the 1997 law on religious associations, the ROC is given priority, and receives the right to provide chaplains in the military. It sees itself as the teacher of morality — a job that is not only necessary but also far too big for it to handle alone. Other churches are not accorded equal privileges under that law. There has always been a lot of bitterness between the major traditions and this law merely adds to this.

If Christians of all denominations would only stop fighting among themselves, the work of re-evangelizing Russia could proceed in earnest. Theological differences contribute to this fighting. Different methods of doing theology and divergent conceptions of salvation place huge obstacles in the path of bringing the Eastern and Western churches together.

Churches bitterly divided

Yet these differences pale in comparison with the hostility that exists between believers from Russia's main denominations. Bitterness marks relations between Catholics, the Orthodox and Protestants, but feelings of resentment exist even within these ecclesiastical families. For example, Stalin forced Baptists and Pentecostals to unite, but after 1991 they quickly got a "divorce." The strong feelings, however, have not yet disappeared. The Orthodox are also divided. Many centuries after the schism that produced the Old Believers, many Orthodox still label them as *raskolniki* or "schismatics."

The Orthodox brand other churches as "sects" and thus sub-Christian. Today there is no love lost between Catholics and Orthodox. The latter accuse Catholics of proselytizing, while Catholics, especially in the Ukraine and Belaïms, want their church buildings, which were given to the Orthodox by Stalin, returned to them. A legacy of hatred exists that continues to drive a wedge between these denominations and prevents unification or even co-operation.

Ecumenism is a dirty word in Russia. During the Soviet period the Orthodox were forced by their government to join the World Council of Churches. These political shenanigans have left a bad taste in the mouths of many Russians, especially the Orthodox, who now emphatically reject the WCC type of ecumenism. True



A church formerly turned into a telegraph office has now been fully reclaimed and remodeled as a church.

ecumenism, in their opinion, involves a return to the only church that has maintained continuity with the church of the apostles: the Orthodox Church. Of course, many Protestants in Russia also have a limited view of ecumenism: they interpret it as exclusively spiritual, like some of their counterparts in the West. Thus it is hardly surprising that few Russians are open to organic unity, that is the formation of a united church, which is the ultimate goal of the ecumenical movement.

Glacially slow progress

Thankfully, there are some exceptions, areas where these divided traditions meet. One of these areas is the Russian-American Christian University in Moscow, where a handful of Orthodox students rub shoulders with Baptists, Pentecostals, and an assortment of other Protestants. At their first graduation ceremony last year, an Orthodox priest was present and even offered a prayer. This is a sign of progress, even if it is glacially slow.

The Christian Church in Russia is weak and seriously divided. Yet, the miracle is that it survived the Soviet period at all. Ordinary believers, especially grandmothers, were the vehicle by which it was transmitted from generation to generation. Today these believers are struggling to survive, as are all Russians, and they continue to need the support of believers from the West.

Immediately after the collapse of the Soviet Union, missionaries flooded Russia. Their intentions were honorable, but their methods

often left something to be desired, as is now clear to many people. This sad legacy continues to hamper the missionary work there. What Russian believers need is not more ill-prepared and insensitive missionaries, as in the nineties, who alienated many Russians with their use of money; instead, they would like more men and women in the area of education and the training of church leaders.

Unfortunately, the government, largely at the urging of the ROC, is making it more and more difficult for foreigners to get into Russia today. This is one reason why we had to leave. It is not that there is no need for our services anymore; on the contrary, the need remains as great as ever. Our enforced leaving, however, does not detract in the least from the importance of education. This is currently the chief area of need in Russia, and it happens to be an area in which Reformed people have the greatest strength.

Leaving with regret

We leave Russia with regret and sorrow. We have witnessed enormous changes in the six and a half years that we lived and worked there, and recounted some of them for you. Yet there is still much that needs to be changed, while some things will probably never change. We have left behind many friends and acquaintances, whom we will greatly miss and who, no doubt, miss us. Russia will always remain an important part of us. Please pray with us that Russia may not close the doors entirely to assistance from the Western churches.

News Comment

Nose for News



Bert Hielema

I AM BACK FROM A short visit to L.A. (less than a week to admire a new granddaughter), where the sun always shines, where the temperature is always just right, where all people are good-looking and all cars have a bumper sticker telling the world that their kid is an honor student. Yet, even though on my return I landed in snow and wind and rain, I was glad to breathe again the Ontario air, because out there in L.A. there is too much hidden pollution.

I AM A NEWSPAPER freak. One article in the *Los Angeles Times* caught my attention: in addition to the locally-produced foul air — for which the City of Angels is well-known — dust from China is a regular feature on the West Coast, including, of course, our very own British Columbia. The Asian Air Express carries particles so fine that the human skin cannot filter them and so they penetrate deeply into the lungs, causing heart attacks, respiratory failures, asthma and thus premature death. Most of this originates in China.

China is probably the most polluted country in the world. Thanks to overgrazing, high pesticide use and intensive farming, soil erosion is a growth industry, vastly aided by droughts and forest clearing. When wind storms rake the Gobi and Taklimakan deserts, gigantic dust clouds are sucked up high into the atmosphere. This "free air" knows no boundaries, doesn't encounter custom officers on its way, and there is no Missile Air Defense that can shoot down this danger, as it travels at a speed of some 2,000 km per day way up in the heavens. Once this polluted stuff positions itself, the jet stream acts as a fast conveyor belt, not hampered by clouds or other weather systems, and so the West Coast of both the U.S. and Canada receive the genuine, undiluted, pure, toxic junk, the very same "goodies" to which Chinese people are daily exposed, from their friendly neighborhood farms, factories and power plants.

In his book, *Earth Odyssey*, Mark Hertsgaard reports: "In Beijing we walked amid air so

thick with coal dust and car fumes that even sunny days looked overcast and foggy. In the bone-dry province of Shanxi, a day's journey west of Beijing, we rode by train all afternoon without seeing anything resembling woods — only a few scattered, spindly trees that looked ready to expire any minute. Everywhere, it seemed, the land had been scalped, the water poisoned, the air toxic and dark."

Welcome to the 21st century. China is now officially under the umbrella of the WTO, the World Trade Organization. In reality, WTO stands for Waste Takes Off. The emissions of Chinese factories which amount to 40 million tons per year of sulfur oxides, are the most in the world and double the U.S. emissions of that pollutant.

HERE IS ANOTHER NOT so comforting item: pesticides, such as DDT that have been banned here since the late 1940s, are part of the fallout as well. We can't blame China. The blame lies squarely with us. In the interest of "efficiency," we use Chinese labor — at 10 cents per hour — to provide us with our toys. Go to the dollar store and look where 90 per cent of the merchandise comes from. I wear a pair of glasses which I bought there for \$1.00. I paid \$24 for a "made-in Canada" equivalent at the optometrist. Maybe he too bought it for \$1.00 after removing the Made-in-China sticker. Our buying smarts are coming home.

Curiously, the word merchandise comes from the Latin word "merx", which can be traced directly to the Roman god Mercury, the divine patron of commerce. It all is part of our religion, or rather our idol worship, the belief system that places dollar signs before every act.

This idolatry is also extended to nationalism, which is particularly striking in the U.S.A. The promotion, at all costs, of one's own country, no longer has a place in a world where pollution knows no national borders. The China dust is a result of the failure of the U.S. to see itself as caretaker of the human family. Its super-nationalism oper-

ates without a human, and therefore a humane, context. We no longer can operate solely on the basis of our selfishness. Nationalism is a form of selfishness. Selfishness is a failure in love — it is the inability to love oneself and one's immediate world, which now extends around the globe, because our community in the world is the world's community.

SOMEHOW IT SEEMS TO me that the pursuit of money is tied in with all this. "The lust of money is the root of all evil," says the Bible, and I believe this. I've never bought a lottery ticket, but, judging by my waiting in line to buy a *Globe and Mail*, I must be one of the few not keen to become a millionaire. Money. Money. Money. People steal, kill even, to get it. Money and its movements matter so much that daily the news tells us the stock market status and the value of our dollar versus its U.S. counterpart.

Lately our loonie has crept up ever so slowly; yet it is far from where it was when I came to Canada in 1951 when I had \$220 (US) on me. The Canadian equivalent then was only \$200 — thus worth more. Now I would receive \$350. The big question today is whether the U.S. dollar is overvalued. The greenback is like anything in high demand: the more people buy it, the higher it goes, which suits the mood in America.

HIGH VALUE DOLLARS mean cheap imports. Shopping in the U.S. is seen as an expression of patriotism. Ever since the Great Depression, so severe because people stopped buying, it has been regarded as their national duty. So, it comes as no surprise that our southerly neighbor has one square foot of shopping space for every 10 Americans, while we must do with only one square foot for every 17 Canadians.

But, as is the case with most drugs, there are side effects: the result is a huge foreign debt. Every day, the U.S. has to borrow \$1.5 billion from "aliens" to pay for its imports. Most unexpectedly, tax cuts and defense increases have pushed the U.S.A. Federal budget into the red. Their year 2000 surplus of \$236 billion has become this year's deficit, estimated to be as high as \$150 billion. (In Ottawa prudent Paul Martin has managed another surplus.) Combine this with record personal and corporate debt and it is no wonder that non-Americans, who so far have footed this monetary imbalance, are becoming nervous and are

starting to sell their dollar assets.

If the foreign money flow stops or even reverses, our southerly neighbors would have to drastically reduce buying BMWs and Porsches and fancy furniture, or the value of the dollar must drop sharply, or both. Neither option is pleasant. If both happen... we are in trouble.

Historically, a drop in currency value happens when trade shortfalls exceed five per cent of the Gross Domestic Product. For the U.S.A., this crucial point will come by year-end. The real danger is that when a nation's money unit drops, it may zoom too far in the other direction.

THERE IS STILL MORE uncertainty. Financial gurus look at the American economy and don't like what they see. Stock prices are calculated on earnings, which are simple to calculate: sales revenue minus expenses = profits. Since 1950, one dollar of profits resulted in a stock price of \$16.00, making the so-called P/E ratio (price/earnings) 16. Today this ratio stands at an over-valued 45. If earnings don't increase rapidly, watch the stock market sink. Investors are also suspicious because lately many firms have engaged in "creative" bookkeeping, overstating profits by leaving out such items as interest on debt. Remember Enron.

An interesting way to value the U.S. Dollar is the Hamburger Standard, compiled yearly by *The Economist*. It prices a Big Mac in

some 30 different countries, including Canada. The average McDonald burger cost \$2.49 in the U.S. In Canada it is \$3.33 (Can.) or \$2.12 (U.S.), 15 per cent less, suggesting that our dollar is 15 per cent undervalued. Based on this measure, we should fetch 74 cents U.S. rather than the present 64. Almost all world currencies show the same picture, indicating that the greenback has never been more overvalued.

What does a cheaper U.S. dollar mean for you and me? Less expensive U.S. vacations. At 75 cents, it only takes \$1.33 Can. to buy one U.S. dollar. Last week I paid \$1.58 Can. However, our exports could suffer with a sudden price increase of 15 per cent. And it could mean more: if the dollar overshoots, the American — and our economy — could tank, as people see prices rise, stock markets tumble and consumer confidence wane. Here is a safer way than lotteries to make money: short the U.S. dollar. George Soros made \$1 billion doing this way with the pound in the early 1990s, when Great Britain was in a similar position.

Bert Hielema can be reached at: hielema@attcanada.net

At Bert's request, this note: His last column was rejected because the editor thought it slandered U.S. President George Bush by stating that he is not a Christian because of his environmental politics.

The editor

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Check out the 2002 Fuel Consumption Guide

(NC)—Does spring fever have you thinking about a new vehicle? Check out the latest edition of Canada's annual *Fuel Consumption Guide* before making a purchase decision.

Published by Natural Resources Canada's, Office of Energy Efficiency, the 2002 guide provides fuel consumption ratings for almost every new car, light-duty truck and van sold in Canada. It's available free of charge as a service to help consumers shop for a fuel-efficient vehicle.

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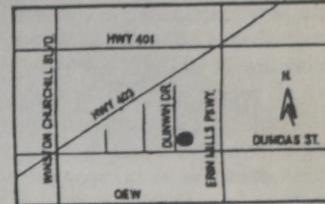
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Classifieds

Obituaries	Adoption Notice	Travel	
<p>The Lord called home our dear brother CLARENCE VISSER in his 86th year. Beloved by sisters Jennie and Gertie Visser and helpmate Rens Visser- Elgersma. Precious father of: Gaelle & Coby Visser Shirley & Ken Vanderlaan Ron & Linda Visser Clarence & Anette Visser Jennifer & Randy Slump Much loved grandpa of 13 and great-grandpa of three. Funeral service was held April 14, Pastor M. Van Donselaar officiating, in Calvin CRC, Dundas, Ont. "What is my only comfort in life and death?" "That I am not my own, but belong to my faithful Savior, Jesus Christ."</p> <p>Ferwerd Fr. Listowel the Neth. Ontario July 11, 1937 April 30, 2002 Suddenly our dearly loved special brother and uncle went to be with His Lord.</p> <p>BILL (WYBREN) EELKEMA Lovingly remembered by his sisters and brothers: Elisabeth DeBlek - Sarnia, Ont. Menno & Effie Eelkema - Listowel, Ont. Greta Eelkema (VanderWal) - Port Stanley, Ont. Peter & June Eelkema - Listowel, Ont George & Patricia Eelkema - Paris, Ont. 20 nieces and nephews, their spouses and children. Predeceased by Parents: Wiebren Eelkema (2000) Syke Eelkema n. Boelens (1993) Brother: John Eelkema (2001) Brother-in-law: Jacob DeBlek (2001) Nephew: Mark Eelkema (2000) The funeral service was held at Bethel Christian Reformed Church, Listowel, Ontario on May 3, 2002. Pastor Jack DeVries officiated. "Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith." Hebrews 12:2</p> <p>Oldehove, Grimsby, Groningen, Neth. Ontario Feb 28, 1907 April 24, 2002 ANTJE HAMMING - BAKKER "In all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us." Romans 8:37 After a brief struggle with heart failure and a subsequent stroke, our dear wife, mother, grandmother and great-grandmother passed away at age 95. In 1951 Mom and Dad and their five young children immigrated to Can- ada. Most of those first years were spent farming in the Wellandport and Dundville area after which they retired near Auburn. Mom's keen interest in her church and in the lives of her family, friends and neighbours inspired many. She will be remembered for her gentle- ness, strength and unconditional love and will be greatly missed by her hus- band of 64 years, Pieter I. Hamming, and her children: Ko & Grace Hamming Marenie & Warner Koiter Tina & Gerry Kromhout Anne & Cor Jongema Wilma & John vanSoelen as well as 18 grandchildren and 18 great-grandchildren. Funeral services were held at Blyth CRC on April 26th. Contact address: P.I. Hamming Shalom Manor, 12 Bartlett St. #227 Grimsby, ON L3M 4N5</p>	<p>September 6, 1925 April 18, 2002 Nieuwerkerk a/d Yssel Smithville Z.H., the Neth. Ontario Peacefully on Thursday, April 18, 2002, the Lord in His wisdom called to his eternal home.</p> <p>WILLIAM VAN HERK Beloved husband of Audrey Van Herk (Griffioen). Dear father and opa of Debbie & John Haanstra of Caistor Centre - Marsha & Joel, Ron & Sarah, Daryl, Adrian, Steven, Leanne, Karen, Daniel Casey & Wilma Van Herk of Stoney Creek - William, Ken Jeff Nelly & Larry Van Bergeyk of Caledonia - Sophie, Grace, Cory Joanne & George Lindeboom of Dundville - Jared, Nicole, Rebecca John & Chris Van Herk of Beamsville Natalie, Stephanie Jim & Holly Van Herk of Cambridge Dalton, Lindsay, Hayden Survived by three sisters in the Neth- erlands and one brother in Australia. Funeral service was held on Monday, April 22, at the Smithville Christian Reformed Church.</p> <p>On Monday, April 22, 2002 at the age of 68 years, our beloved husband, father, and grandfather,</p> <p>GERRIT WILLEM "George" BRUNSVELD passed away quietly from his earthly home to his home in glory. Perfect peace at last is his. Beloved husband of Hendrika Brunsved (nee Menk- horst). Loved Father of: Annette (Dale Bequette) of Lunenburg Marianne (Herman Prinzen) of Picton Will Brunsved (Bonnie Bruining) of Newington Elizabeth (John Sluskes) of Lansdowne Dear brother of Ineke (Roelof Oosten) and Cilia (Han Jansen), all of Holland. Sadly missed by his step-mother Eliza- beth Brunsved-Bieker of Holland and 15 grandchildren. Predeceased by his parents Hendrik Brunsved and Antje Wildenbeest; one grandson, Gerrit Brunsved, one son-in-law, Allan Stuart, and one brother, Antoon Brunsved (Grada). The funeral service was held Thursday, April 25, 2002 at the Williamsburg Christian Reformed Church with Pastor George Rowaan of- ficiating.</p> <p>Dec. 24, 1930 April 28, 2002 For us unexpected, but at God's time, He took home our brother in-law and uncle.</p> <p>JIM (JENTJE) BOOTSMA May He be our source of strength and comfort in this time of sorrow. Beloved husband of Carol (Klaske) Greidanus. F. & L. Greidanus Gietema - Orillia, Ont. C. VanderWoude Greidanus - Brampton, Ont. T. Greidanus DeHaan - Brampton, Ont. U. Greidanus - Dokkum, Friesland T. Walinga - Oudega, W. Friesland T. Greidanus - Joure, Friesland W. & I. Greidanus - Stroosma, Leeuwarden, Friesland. S. & H. Greidanus Herder - Gauw, Friesland and their children. Home address: C. Bootsma Greidanus 32-80 Balvina Drive East, Goderich, ON N7H 4L8</p>	<p>VELDHUIS "Great is the Lord, and most worthy of praise, his greatness no one can fathom."</p> <p>With thankfulness to God, the giver of life, we joyfully announce the adoption of our fifth precious child.</p> <p>Olivia Alida Johanna born on August 2, 1999. Very proud and blessed parents are Paul and Irene Veldhuis. A new sister for Marlaina, Danielle, Gerri-Lynne and Andrew-John. Sharing in our joy are grandparents Mrs. Beverley Sloofstra (12th grand- child) and Mr. John Veldhuis (28th grandchild) of Jarvis, Ont. Special "kleindochter" to Peit and Ria Kroneman of Nijmegen, the Nether- lands. Rejoicing with us in heaven are Pake Allan Sloofstra and Grandma Gerda Veldhuis. Home Address: 4357 Glancaster Rd., RR 3, Mount Hope, ON L0R 1W0</p> <p>For Rent</p> <p>Georgian Shores Cottage is now rent- ing. Fully furnished lakefront cottage that sleeps 8. Located on Georgian Bay in the heart of the Georgian Tri- angle tourist area. Visit our web page at www.bmts.com/~gregayrh/ to see pic- tures and learn more about Georgian Shores. New low rate of \$550/wk, \$50 less is booked before June 15. For info: 519-538-5581 or: ggregayrh@bmts.com</p> <p>Waterfront cottage in Bancroft area. Ideal for families with children. 3 bed- rooms @ \$500/wk. Quiet lake, clean water. Available last 2 weeks in July and for August & September. Call 613-392-8488, 604-532-4031, 613-474-2474 (July).</p> <p>Bed & Breakfast</p> <p>Traveling through Northern Ontario? We have a cedar log cabin available for rent in Cochrane. For more info, please call 705-272-6169, or e-mail us at geoadail@puc.net</p>	<p>LUNCH IS ON US!</p> <p>Book your Martinair or KLM flight to Europe and receive 10 Euro's per person</p> <p><small>Offer valid until June 30, some restrictions apply</small></p> <p>Valentine Travel Service 905-890-5333 or 800-268-6144 in London call 519-472-2700/800-265-1141</p> <p>Event</p> <p>40 years of "Shining Like Star" Clinton and District Christian School August 24th, 2002 Mini-reunions, Barbecue Social & Evening Program 17 month commemorative calendar available to order. Call 519-482-7851 or 519-482-9709 for more information, to reserve dinner tickets & to order calendar before July 26th. Please tell your friends, neighbours & relatives!</p> <p>Miscellaneous</p> <p>Christian Courier, Canada's only biweekly Reformed newspaper, offers: • A Reformed perspective on events and culture, • A point of contact with the church worldwide, • A catalyst to set you thinking.</p> <p>Subscribe now, and get our special introductory rate, for first-time subscribers: \$25 per year, for 26 issues. Call Christian Courier for more details at: 1-800-969-4838.</p> <p>Job Opportunity</p> <p>Director of Enrolment Services</p> <p>The King's University College currently has an opening for Director of Enrolment Services. Reporting to the President, the Director will oversee a department responsible for recruitment of new students, development of institutional practices that promote student retention, and financial aid administration. 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Wilma Runia, Chair of Council, Calvin CRC
 7 Gilbey Dr, Ottawa ON Canada K2E 5S4
 Ph: 613-225-6468 Fax: 613-225-1132
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Miscellaneous

the Netherlands

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Classifieds

Church Anniversaries

FORWARD FROM FIFTY
 Blenheim Christian Reformed Church of Blenheim, Ontario will celebrate their 50th Anniversary, June 22 and 23, 2002. We invite all former pastors, members, and friends to join us for dinner and social evening on Saturday June 22 at 5:00 p.m. and Sunday worship at 10:00 a.m. For more information and dinner reservations (as space is limited), please call: Ann VandenBoogaard at 519-352-1772 or Catherine Verbeek at 519-674-2171 or e-mail: mverbeek@ciaccess.com

It is with thanksgiving for God's faithfulness that Mountainview Christian Reformed Church of Grimsby, Ontario, joyfully invites you to be part of our 40th anniversary celebration service at 10:00 a.m. on Sunday, June 9, 2002. All present and former members are invited to participate in worship and fellowship.

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Miscellaneous

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Healthy habits are lifetime habits

(NC)—Building a foundation in the early grades gives students a head start in developing an awareness and attitude to shape a healthy lifestyle that can have a lifetime effect. That is why it is vital for parents and teachers to work together to reach children at a young age and to help them develop the skills they will need to develop healthy habits.

The Lung Association's *Lungs Are For Life*, developed in partnership with the Curriculum and School-Based Health Resource Centre with funding from the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, is a new and innovative smoking program, which teaches

students in a fun and interesting way how to avoid tobacco smoke and other harmful drugs. Teachers can easily implement the curriculum-based program anytime during the school year and parents are encouraged to participate through take-home activities and class participation in the primary program.

Lungs Are For Life is now available to all elementary and high schools in Ontario. To order the program free of charge, simply call 1-800-972-2636 or visit The Lung Association online at www.on.lung.ca.

- News Canada

Event

After 36 years of teaching,

BERNIE KRUISSELBRINK

has indicated his desire to retire.

Former colleagues, past students, and friends are invited to celebrate Bernie's years of service to the **Chatham Christian School** in a special retirement evening.

WHEN: Friday, June 7, 2002 at 7:30 p.m.

WHERE: Chatham Christian School
 475 Keri Drive South
 Chatham, Ontario

If you wish to contribute in any way to this celebration please call John Van Pelt at the school, 519-352-4980.

I have known and admired ICS for many years.

John Stott, author and founder of John Stott Ministries for Third World pastors



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Events

DE DRIE EN DERTIGSTE (33)

HOLLANDSE DAG

WORDT GEHOUDEN D.V.
 WOENSDAG 12 JUNY 2002, OM 10 UUR IN
 DE MOOREFIELD COMMUNITY CENTRE.

SAMENZANG, VOORDRACHTEN, SPECIALE MUZIEK ENZ.

SPREKER: Ds. R. HARTMAN van GODERICH, ONT.
LUNCH MEENEMEN EN UW EIGEN KOFFIEKOP.
VRIJ KOFFIE EN KOEK.

Voor gezelligheid en plezierig uitgaan,
 Moet je **DE HOLLANDSE DAG** niet overslaan!

Voor nadere informatie telefoneer:
 Hilbert Rumph, tel. 519-638-2053

**THE CAMBRIDGE (MARANATHA)
 CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH**
 would like to invite all friends and former
 congregations of

Pastor Ralph and Anne Koops

to give thanks to God for their ministry at a **retirement celebration** which will take place at Forward Baptist Church, 455 Myers Road, Cambridge, Ont. on Saturday, June 22, 2002 at 7:30 p.m. Anyone wishing to participate in the program or would like more information, please contact Mary VanderMunnik at 519-623-3788 or Ann Fluit 519-623-5261. Farewell service will be held June 23, 2002 at 10:00 a.m. at Maranatha Christian Reformed Church, 94 Elgin St. S., Cambridge, ON for those who would like to attend.

Events/Advertising

Calendar of Events

Items appearing in this column are run free of charge if they advertise an admission-free event, if they accompany an ad for the same event, or at the discretion of CC. In case of free listing, space limitations apply. The charge otherwise is \$7.50 per line, or \$1.50 per 1/3 line, per insertion.

June 1, 2 Williamsburg CRC 50th anniversary, Williamsburg, Ont. See ad in this issue.

June 1, 2 Mount Hamilton CRC, Hamilton, Ont. 50th Anniversary Open house & special worship. Call 905-383-8315 or visit www.mthamiltoncrc.org

June 7 Retirement - Bernie Kruiselbrink - Chatham Chr. School See ad this issue.

June 9 Mountainview CRC, Grimsby, Ont. 40th anniversary service and fellowship at 10 a.m. See ad this issue.

June 12 Hollandse Dag 10 uur in de Moorefield Community Center. See ad this issue.

June 15 Spring of Hope Concert, Wine Tour, Dinner & Concert at Stonechurch Vineyards in Niagara -on-the-Lake and featuring the Ambassador Chr. Male Chorus. Proceeds to Niagara Warehouse of Hope and Chr. Ref. World Mission (water & medical projects in Nigeria) For Reservations & tickets: 905-935-3535

June 15, 16 CRC St. Thomas, Ont. celebrating 50th anniversary with picnic and service. Info: Jan Vanderveest 519-631-5285 or e-mail: jan@gtn.on.ca

June 19 Hollandse Dag 10 a.m. First CRC 310 Kingscourt Av. Kingston, Ont. Speaker: Jim Kooistra, Topic: "Bloeiende in de beste jaren" For info call 613-546-5615

June 22, 23 Blenheim CRC, Blenheim, Ont. celebrating 50th anniversary with dinner, social, and worship. Call 519-352-1772 or 519-674-2171 for info.

June 22, 23 Maranatha CRC, Cambridge. Retirement celebration. Pastor Ralph & Anne Koops. See ad in this issue.

July 13, 14 Lindsay CRC, Lindsay, Ont. celebrating 50th anniversary with dinner and service. For info Ph: 705-328-017 Fax: 705-328-3156 or E-mail: lawilms@sympatico.ca

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Back to God Hour

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Burns Lake - CFLO 9:15 am 1400
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 Penticton - CKOR 8:00 am 800
 Port Alberni - CJAV 7:00 pm 1240
 Prince George - CIRX 7:00 am 94.3
 Princeton - CHOR 8:00 am 1400
 Smithers - CFBV 9:15 am 1230
 Summerland - CHOR 8:00 am 1450
 Vernon - CJIB 9:30 pm 940

London - CKSL 7:00 am 1410
 Newmarket - CKDX 9:00 am 88.5
 Oshawa - CKDO 8:00 am 1350
 Owen Sound - CFOS 7:00 am 560
 Pembroke - CHVR 10:00 am 96.7
 Sarnia - CHOK 7:30 am 1070
 Stratford - CJCS 8:30 am 1240
 Windsor - CKLW 7:30 am 800
 Wingham - CKNX 10:30 am 920

ALBERTA

Lethbridge - CJIL
MONDAY - 10:00 pm
Saturday - 3:00 pm
ONTARIO - CTS
Saturday - 7:30 pm

Check your local listings
 for cable outlets airing
Primary Focus

ALBERTA

Brooks - CIBQ 8:00 am 1340
 Ft. McMurray-CJOK 8:30 am 1230
 High River - CHRB 6:30 pm 1140
 Edmonton - CJCA 6:00 pm 930
 Westlock - CFOK 7:30 am 1370

NEW BRUNSWICK

Saint John - CHSJ 9:00 am 94.1

SASKATCHEWAN

Estevan - CJSL 8:00 am 1280
 Weyburn - CFSL 8:00 am 1190

MANITOBA

Altona - CFAM 9:30 am 950
 Steinbach - CHSM 8:00 am 1250
 Winnipeg - CKJS 9:00 am 810

ONTARIO

Atikokan - CHAK 9:30 am 1240
 Chatham - CFCO 6:30 am 630
 Fort Frances - CFOB 9:30 am 640
 Guelph - CJOY 8:30 am 1460
 Hamilton - CHAM 7:30 am 820
 Kapuskasing - CKAP 7:00 am 580

Kid's Corner-Radio
 Drayton Valley, AB - CIBW 8:30 am-Sunday 92.9fm
 Nordegg, AB - CHBW 8:30 am-Sunday 93.9fm
 Rocky Mtn. House, AB - CHBW 8:30 am-Sunday 94.5fm
 Prince Rupert, BC - CIAJ 10 am-Saturday 100.7fm
 Niagara Falls, ON - CJRN 7:30am-Sunday 710am

CALVIN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Invites you to
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Lecturer: Dr. Ron Nydam

Prof. of Pastoral Care, Calvin Theological Seminary

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Three of the four sessions offered will be directed towards pastors and pastoral care workers. One session will be directed towards elders.

Pastors will leave with sound practical tools that will enhance their pastoral ministry. Elders will leave with a deepened understanding of how they can minister to the married and the divorced.

Dr. Nydam, an engaging speaker, brings many years of parish and professional pastoral counseling experience.

When: June 5, 7:00 p.m. - June 6, 10:00 p.m. 2002

Where: Redeemer University College, Ancaster, ON

To register contact: Rev. Andrew Beunk

ph. (905) 643-4340; fax. (905) 643-4199 email: abeunk69@calvin.edu

Cost: \$69 conference only; \$91 with meals; \$149 with meals/lodging

Seminar for ELDERS: Thurs. June 6, 7:00 p.m. Cost: \$5

C.R.C. ST. THOMAS, ONTARIO.

The First Christian Reformed Church of St. Thomas, Ontario, will be celebrating its

50th anniversary June 15 and 16, 2002, D.V.

A picnic will be held in Waterworks Park, St. Thomas, June 15, beginning at 1:00 P.M. with dinner at 4:00 P.M., followed by a program in the Church on Elm Street at 7:30 P.M. A special worship service will be held to commemorate God's faithfulness to our congregation on Sunday, June 16 at 10:00 A.M. in the Church.

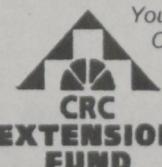
All friends and former members are cordially invited to celebrate this event with us.

Please contact Mr. Jan Vanderveest if you plan to attend.

Phone 519-631-5285 or E-Mail: jan@gtn.on.ca

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News

Canadian Bible Society completes 23-year translation project — first draft of Inuktitut language Bible

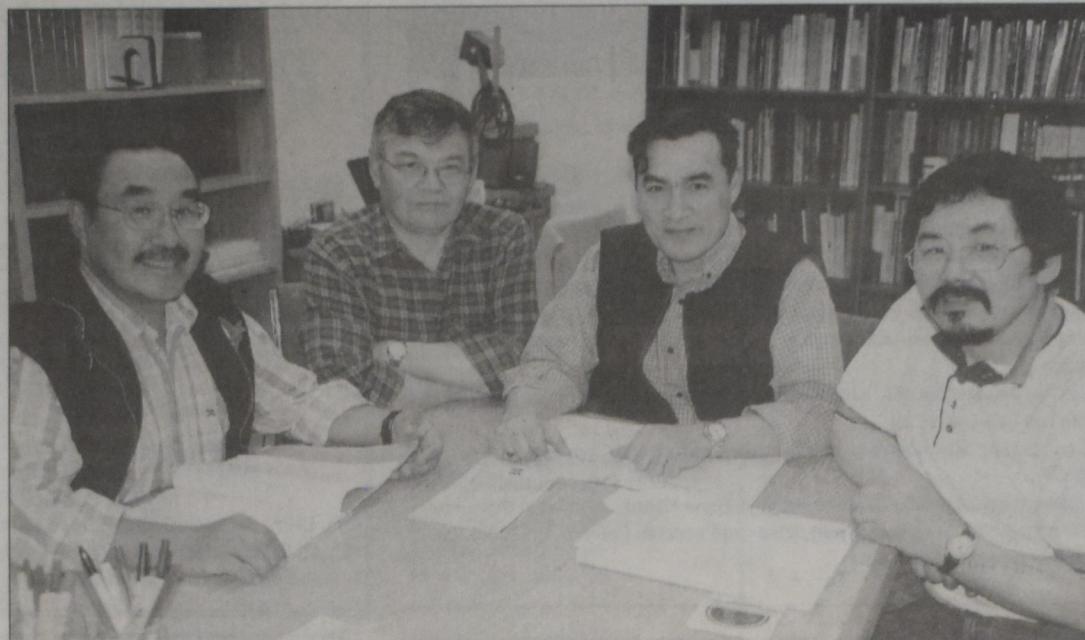
TORONTO (Canada News-Wire) — The Canadian Bible Society announced April 17 that translation of the Inuktitut language Bible is now completed in first draft. The culmination of a 23-year-long joint effort by the Canadian Bible Society and the Diocese of the Arctic of the Anglican Church of Canada, the first draft translation was completed in December 2001, at the translation offices of the Canadian Bible Society, in Kitchener, Ontario.

Inuktitut (In-NOOK-ti-toot) is one of the three official languages of Canada's newest territory, Nunavut, and the aboriginal mother tongue of approximately 28,000 Canadians, (primarily, Inuit of the Canadian Eastern Arctic and Northern Quebec). This new translation will give these people the opportunity to read from the complete Bible in their own dialect for the first time.

"The Inuit people are eagerly awaiting the publication of the entire Bible in their language," said Hart Wiens, Director of Scripture Translation for the Canadian Bible Society.

This project began in 1978, when Dr. Eugene Nida traveled to Baffin Island to recruit translators on behalf of the Bible Society. Four young Anglican ministers from the area took up the challenge. Rev. Benjamin Arreak, Rev. Jonas Allooloo, Rev. Andrew Atagotaaluk and Rev. James Nashak, began work on the New Testament. Later, Rev. Joshua Arreak joined the team.

For almost a quarter of a century, the translators traveled twice yearly to various locations in the Arctic and occasionally to Kitchener, Ontario, where,



SUE CARELESS/CANADIAN BIBLE SOCIETY

Four of the Inuit translators: (from left) Rev. Jonas Allooloo, Rev. Benjamin Arreak, Rev. Andrew Atagotaaluk and Rev. Joshua Arreak.

unhampered by the demands of parish life, they would work intensively for four to six weeks at a time on their task.

"From the beginning of the project, we were all overwhelmed by the responsibility of translating God's word into the Inuktitut language. We were afraid and yet compelled to move forward because the people needed the Bible in their language," said Rev. Benjamin Arreak, Translation Team Co-ordinator.

Many practical challenges

The translators faced many practical challenges. "Many living languages have no words to describe daily life in ancient Palestine. For example, the Inuit people

recognize six or seven 'seasons' that do not really correspond either to English terms (spring, summer, fall, winter) or to biblical seasons (rainy, dry)," said Hart Wiens.

Preserving the language

Inuktitut has a long history as an oral language, but the Inuit had no written form of their language until the late 1800s, when Edmund Peck brought the syllabic system to the Arctic. It is a phonetic form of writing originally developed by Rev. James Evans for the Cree Indians, and adapted for the Inuit so they would have a way to record their history, previously preserved only through oral tradition.

"Translating the Bible into Inuktitut has given our language importance and has preserved it,"

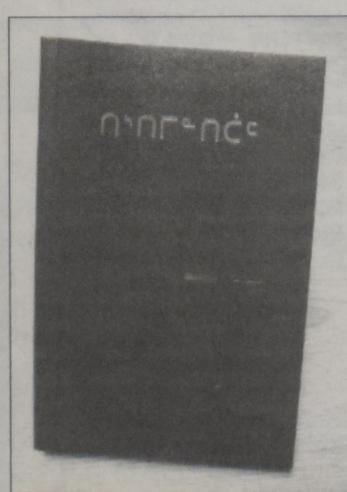
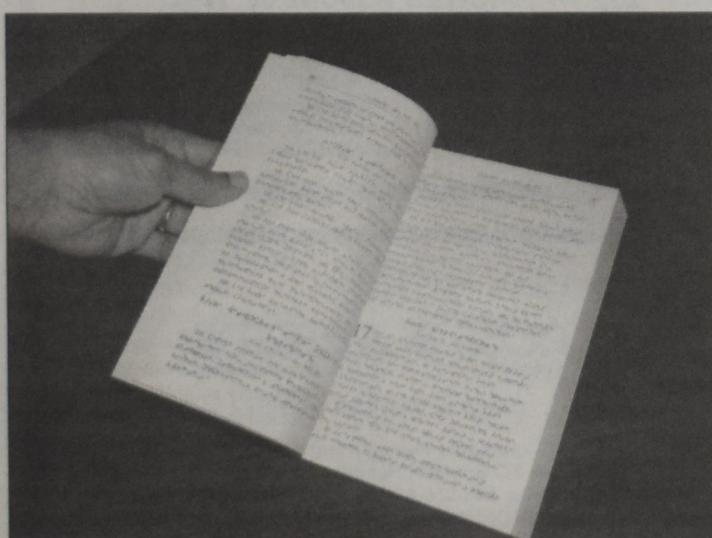
said translator, Rev. Jonas Allooloo.

Starting a new phase

With the completion of the draft, the project now enters a new phase — community checking, consultant approval, final proofreading, printing and preparation of Inuktitut language study guides, to be completed by 2005.

The Canadian Bible Society, (headquartered in Toronto, Ontario), translates, publishes and distributes the Bible throughout Canada, and has Bibles, New Testaments and other Scriptures available in 111 foreign languages as well as 23 Canadian aboriginal languages. The first Canadian native translation to be published by the Bible Society dates back to 1804, when the Gospel of John was translated into Mohawk.

Formally founded in 1904 and chartered in 1906, the Canadian Bible Society is a member of the United Bible Societies, a fellowship of 137 national Bible societies around the world. The societies work in partnership with churches and other Bible agencies to facilitate and support translation work around the globe. The Bible is now available — in whole or in part — in more than 2,285 different languages. Four thousand languages have been identified into which no book of the Bible has been translated, and there is a recognized need for translation into at least 2,000 of these remaining languages.



ROBERT SIMPSON/CANADIAN BIBLE SOCIETY PHOTOS (2)

A page from the Inuktitut New Testament (Matthew 16 & 17). Right: the cover for the New Testament, published in 1992.

News Digest

First Native American woman bishop

LAWRENCEVILLE, Va. — The Episcopal Church "set another place at its table of inclusivity" April 6 when it ordained Carol Joy Gallagher as suffragan bishop in the Diocese of Southern Virginia — the first Cherokee woman bishop in the worldwide Anglican Communion, reports Religion Today.

According to the Episcopal News Service, the consecration service was held at St. Paul's College in Lawrenceville, Va., one of the three historically black colleges supported by the Episcopal Church. The liturgy was a blend of traditional Anglican liturgy mixed with soul music and Native American elements, especially from Gallagher's Cherokee heritage that comes from her mother, Betty WalkingStick Theobald. The new bishop's great-great-great-grandmother walked the Trail of Tears from North Carolina to Oklahoma in the 1830s. Her late father was a Presbyterian minister.

Every climate on one mountain

TORONTO — Mount Kilimanjaro, the perpetually ice-capped Tanzanian peak 320 km south of the equator, offers five sharply different climates, from polar to equatorial, reports the *Globe and Mail*. American filmmaker David Breashears says: "Where else on our planet can you journey from the Amazon to the North Pole" in only 45 miles?

The mountain's environments, adds *The Boston Globe*, "range from dripping wet to utterly dry, and from blistering hot to brutally cold. There's a warm, dryish savannah typical of the African plains; a steamy, Amazon-like rainforest; a heath and moors section worthy of the British Isles; an Alpine desert that could be Switzerland or even Siberia; and finally, the sort of glacial plateau that might be found in Antarctica."

Signs of the times

Here are some signs of the times taken from the Fellowship of Merry Christians' website: A sign on the outside wall of a Maryland convent reads: "Trespassers will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law." — The Sisters of Mercy.

A message on the outside sign of Faith Temple Church, in Sioux Falls, SD, states: "We welcome all denominations — \$1, \$5, \$10, \$20, \$50, \$100."